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'Tween You and Me.

by ELFIN HALL.

1879.

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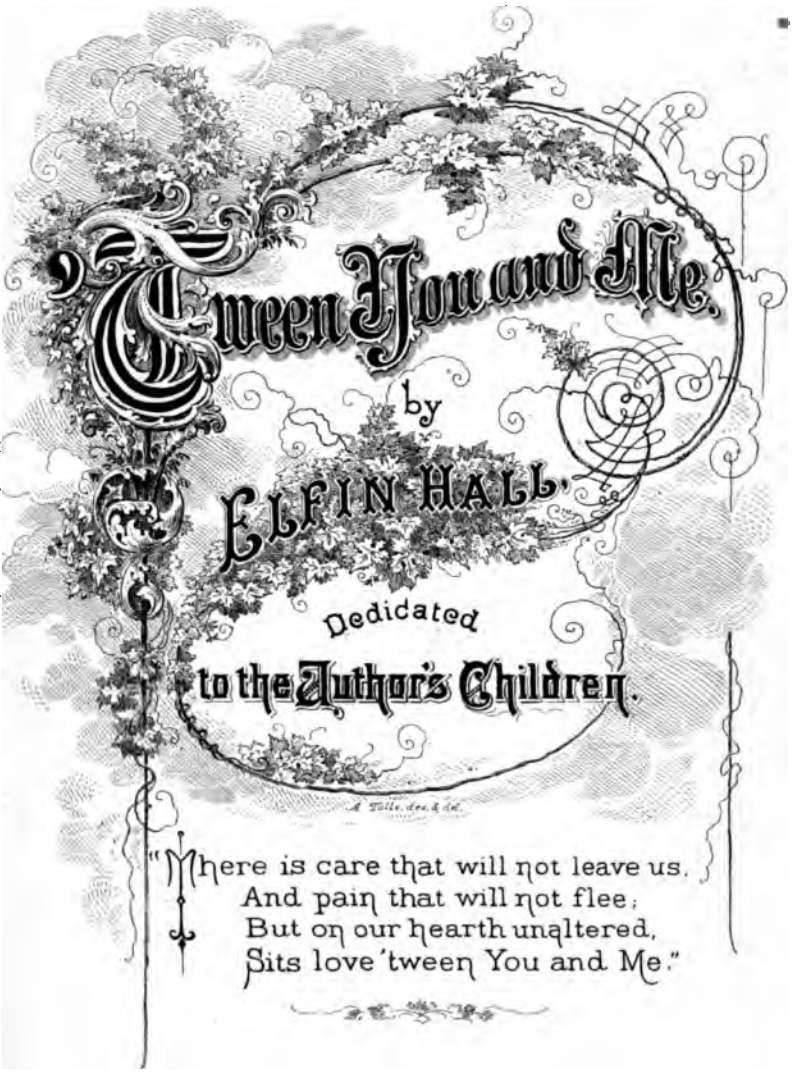

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'Tween You and Me.

"Christmas is Coming."

COMING to the homes of wealth and luxury in town and in country, and bright eyes grow brighter and rosy cheeks flush with a deeper glow, and plump arms are clasped around the necks of grown-up sisters and aunties, while wonderful secrets are confided to their keeping. Papas come home laden with parcels that quickly disappear into the depths of some dark closet; mammas are out on important errands, never heeding the chill air nor the fast-falling flakes which give warning that a snow storm is setting in. Cooks are deep in the mysteries of jellies, boned-turkey, cakes and ices. Beautiful Christmas trees, glittering with rare and costly gifts, are closely guarded in closed rooms. Dear old Santa Claus, the best and dearest saint in all the calendar to the hearts of the children, is coming this very night after long weeks of glad anticipation.

"Christmas is coming" to the homes in the next street, but it brings no gifts, not even warmth and food. Father is out seeking work; mother is hurrying with numbed fingers to finish a piece of sewing by which to gain a pittance to buy bread for supper. Pale, pinched children are huddled before a scant fire, vainly trying to warm their chilled limbs, and wishing that the cruel winter were over.

The early twilight deepens, and out in the gaslit streets are little blue-faced, half-clad urchins, and girls with ragged shawls drawn tightly over their heads, gazing longingly through plate glass windows upon toys so rare and beautiful they must surely have been imported from fairy land, wondering, perhaps, as older minds sometimes wonder, why they must have no share in all this happiness — why Santa Claus remembers only the rich people, passing by so many homes where little children live and try to be good, where many a little sad-eyed girl keeps house and tends the baby all day long with womanly patience and care, while mother is out doing a day's washing; and the little brother comes in at night cold, tired and hungry, with the few pence earned by selling papers or small wares at the street corners.

Fathers and mothers, and you who have never been called by those sacred names — One who loved little children said:

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father."

Are there not many who pass these forlorn little ones, with the blight of poverty on their lives, who out of their abundance could cause some of their little hearts to thrill with an unusual happiness? And are there not some of us who will sit by our firesides on Christmas Eve with a pain in our hearts that is more keen on these yearly anniversaries, thinking of a loved and beautiful child, whose absence leaves one gift less on our tree? And shall we not in remembrance of these dear ones, removed forever from our care, make for some other little heart a "Merry Christmas?"

Empty Cradles.

STANDING in the nursery is the heavy, old-fashioned mahogany cradle, belonging to a generation that has been. As unlike the dainty little swinging oriole nests that are found in the nurseries of to-day as the frail, delicate, helpless little mothers are unlike the staid, pains-taking, sedate matrons of an age that has glided into the past. How many a dim, dusty old garret has stored away among its rubbish one of these cradles, with heavy, projecting top, which has

shaded many a little face from the summer sunbeams, peering through the great lilac and syringa bushes, that sent their fragrance through the open casement, or shielded it from the draughts when the bare old elm trees "wrung their many hands in the bleak wintry air;" faces that have grown wrinkled and careworn—faces that have grown seared and hardened—faces that are hidden away under waving grass, and myrtle, and daisies, leaving only a memory as faint and sweet as the odor of the blossoms blown through the window by the summer wind.

Not long ago beside these cradles sat the patient mother, in neat gingham or calico dress, black silk apron, plain collar, and hair drawn simply back and fastened by a serviceable comb, nimble fingers deftly plying the knitting needles, or basket of darning by her side, one foot on the rocker, singing a gentle lullaby, or perhaps teaching a little five-year-old daughter to piece neatly together the patchwork blocks for a new quilt. To-day mamma sits by the parlor window in rich silk, and laces, and jewels, trifling with some bit of netting, or crocheting, or embroidery. Bridget is in the nursery giving baby the bottle, in which she has surreptitiously admixed a little soothing syrup to insure a quiet sleep, that she may spend the evening in the kitchen with her "second cousin," while papa and mamma are at some fashionable assembly.

How many a tender memory clings to the old cradle that has awakened these reminiscences — a cradle that has rocked two generations. First, how it was brought fresh and smart, in its new coat of varnish, into the pretty cottage home, where brook and birds, and rustling trees all united in a song of welcome to its little occupant; how the dainty pillows and blankets were carefully arranged and the first baby in that home was laid in the soft nest; how as years passed other babies came and claimed their share of rocking; how little fevered heads rolled restlessly on its pillows, and little limbs grew cold and stiff, and dying eyes gazed up from the dear cradle-bed where they were wont to find so much of cosy rest and comfort; how others grew into manhood, two to fall on the battle-field and others to struggle on the great battle-field of life; and at last, how the old cradle came to be voted a useless piece of furniture, only fit for the garret, where it stood several years consigned to dust, cobwebs and solitude, until one bright winter morning it was again brought forth into the light of day, dusted, rubbed and fitted up with dainty bedding, and received into its capacious old arms the first baby of another generation, whose mother it had rocked years ago. And here it stands in the nursery to-day, with one sturdy boy seated on the top and two inside, with little thought in their mischievous heads of the memories it has called up, or the associations which cluster around the old cradle.

Common People.

A MAN is a fool who can't get rich," said a millionaire the other day as he leaned back in the luxurious cushions of his easy chair and watched the smoke curling up from his fragrant Havana. How numerous the fools must be in this world I pondered, the hard-palmed, toil-worn, wrinkled, weary, hopeless-looking men that we meet in our daily walks. Are they all fools? Or, have they been less ready to take advantage of their fellow-men; to cheat the widow, to grind the fatherless, to make capital out of the misfortunes of others, and thus seen their less scrupulous and therefore more successful rivals reap a golden harvest, while only the gleaning of the field has fallen to them.

"It is so unpleasant to come in contact with common people," said one of fortune's favorites. "Common people!" Who are they? The seamstress, who toils wearily through the long hours of the night, stopping often to soothe a sick and restless child, that Madame's dress may be ready in time for to-morrow's reception? The tired girl, who stands behind the counter all the bright spring day waiting upon fair and fastidious ladies, and who goes to her humble home at night with aching head and discouraged heart, contrast-

ing the hardness of her lot with the ease of theirs? The sad-eyed woman, who sits beside you in the street car, with a bundle of calico shirts on her lap, for the making of which her employer pays her the munificent sum of fifteen cents each?

Draw your robes more closely around you, my lady, and cover your skye-terrier with your lace mouchoir lest the air may be contaminating, for *these* are the "common people." Go to your elegant home and give your dress to Nannine, to remove the traces of the dust from the bare feet of a dirty urchin, as he was thrust from the car with the little basket of wood violets for which he vainly besought custom. Sprinkle a few drops of eau de cologne over Sandy, to remove the vile odors that linger in his shaggy coat, and never, never again do so absurd a thing as to take a street car and subject yourself to such annoyances.

Yes, these are the "common people." We meet them in the highways and in the by-ways, and there are poor people, and unfashionable people, and unfortunate people, and people we can't shake off; and if we do, they sometimes rise up before us with sad, reproachful eyes, that make us uncomfortable, which is very, very annoying. But by-and-by we leave all these pleasant things, stately mansions, elegant clothing, carriages, servants, bonds and mortgages, deeds and stocks, real estate, gold and silver. We are on a

level with the "common people." Strange but true! Down in the common earth! A more costly stone is laid over us, perhaps, but that doesn't much matter, and I am afraid that in that country where gold isn't used as weight in the balance there will be found a great many very poor rich men — men who won't have much capital to start on — and a vast number of "common people" who once went clothed in garments of purple. For "the rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man's the gowd for a' that."

Legally Divorced.

"Absolute Divorces Legally Obtained from the Courts of Different States. No Publicity. Advice free," etc.

WHAT would our grandparents have thought of the above, I wonder? The nuptial tie was not so easily severed in their day, they took each other "for better or for worse, for rich or for poor, in sickness and in health," to love, cherish and comfort, and was their generation less happy than ours?

I think not, judging from the serene and patient-looking old couples that I occasionally meet in street, or cars, with faces marked with the lines of many cares, trials, afflictions and disappointments, yet the calm eyes tell of a steadfast love for each other,

faith in each other and in the mercy that has spared them to descend the hill which they have climbed hand in hand together. And when I consider the reckless haste and jostle of the age in which we live, of the fast young men looking for rich wives, and the frivolous, useless young women, whose only aim in life is to follow where fashion leads, and to be the center of attraction to a bevy of brainless fops, finally selecting one for a husband, whose chief recommendation consists in his graceful form, the elegant twirl of his moustache and his nonchalant and easy way of paying doubtful compliments. I cannot wonder at the advertisement which so often meets my eye in the daily papers. Oh! wretched, wretched homes all over the land, more especially in the larger cities, those hot-beds of vice and misery — homes where husbands and wives pass their lives in wrangling and bitterness, where little children are left to the care of immoral and ignorant servants, while the father spends his days in mad speculation and his nights at the gaming-table, and the mother in shopping and flirting with her male acquaintances.

There comes to me sometimes a glimpse of a home in striking contrast to these, which deserve not the sacred name — a home just one step this side of Paradise, where the marriage bond was "wrought in heaven." It is a little removed, this ideal home of

mine, from the bustling town, where the slight isolation of country life leads to an individuality and thoughtfulness of character. The house is thoroughly comfortable and convenient, filled with the evidences of taste, refinement and culture; there are grand old trees about it, where the birds build their nests in summer, and waving grass, and beautiful pictures framed in every door and window; there's a harmony, a fitness and purpose in all things whether for use or adornment. As year after year passes, children are welcomed as a gift from heaven, and grow beautiful, happy and intelligent in the loving, peaceful atmosphere of home. Guests are entertained with true and refined courtesy and hospitality, and dependents are made to feel that their comfort and welfare are considered. Should some slight difference of opinion occur between husband and wife it does not broaden into a wide gulf over which are hurled the bitter words "improperly mated," "want of affinity," "better separate," instead, after a little kind discussion, a little yielding on either side, the difficulty is amicably arranged. And as the years pass and a calm and beautiful old age comes creeping on, their children and their children's children rise up and call them blessed.

Friends, pause a moment in your eager haste, before availing yourselves of the "advice free," etc., in the advertisement above, and think that by-and-by, a few

years, perhaps weeks or days, the good Father will grant you a divorce "absolute and legal."

Auction Sale.

"The entire furniture of the elegant residence No. 518 —— street will be sold at auction, on Wednesday, April 10th.

THE red flag floating from the window announces that the day long dreaded by the occupants has arrived, and the grand mansion, whose doors never before swung open except to admit the aristocratic world, is thronged by a motley company, swaying from drawing-room to library, from bed-chamber to dining-room, from conservatory to basement. The tone of the grand piano has been tried by fingers unaccustomed to draw melody from the keys of pearl; paintings and statuary have been discussed in a manner amusing to the half dozen connoisseurs scattered among the throng; mattresses and pillows have been poked into, brocatelle and lace curtains have been critically examined, silver and china inspected, the handsome Axminster and velvet carpets pronounced moth eaten. But now the voice of the auctioneer is heard above the din and noise of the jostling crowd, where second-hand dealers, boarding-housekeepers, and a few of the elite of society, elbow each other unceremoniously. One

after another the elegant works of art, suits of magnificent furniture, rich silver and porcelain are bid off. Drawing-room, dining-room, library and basement all are finished, and now to the nursery hasten those eager for a bargain. Here are the two little beds, with their dainty coverings and drapery, and here the rose-wood crib from which baby raised his little curly head this morning with a wondering "coo" at mamma's swollen, tear-stained face, and the sobs of little Will and Jessie.

The crowd is gone at last, and quiet once more reigns throughout the stately mansion. From one of the upper rooms descends the once happy mistress of this elegant home, her baby clinging to her neck, her little son and daughter to her hand. To-morrow rude hands will carry away her household gods. Two short months ago she was a happy, idolized wife, rich, courted, honored; to-day she is a widow, poor, neglected, forgotten. Friends had sympathized — a few days after her bereavement. What more could reasonably be expected? people in affliction are such doleful company; and then rumor whispered they had been living beyond their means, and when all was settled there would be no means left. In short, it became very evident that the petted and fascinating Mrs. Courtenay would have to be dropped from the "set" she had been accustomed to entertain in her elegant and hospitable home. Heaven help you, poor widow!

and may your future home be far away from the heartless, fickle, and selfish "set" who call themselves "society" — away from the struggling, stifling life of the pent-up city, to the sweet peace of some quiet home, where the gentle, loving voice of Nature shall soothe and heal your sorrows; where your fatherless little children shall cease to long for the glittering toys and pleasures that only wealth can obtain, in the joyous freedom of the woods and meadows, where birds and trees, flowers and streams, and all sweet and lovely sights and sounds shall influence them to better, purer, and nobler lives than those reared in luxury often attain.

Women's Work.

THERE is a great deal said of the inadequacy of the prices paid for the work done by women, and of the few avenues open to those compelled to earn for themselves a livelihood. Now it seems to me this is in a great measure the fault of woman herself, or of those having charge of young girls. Scarce one woman in one hundred, in any class of society, is thoroughly educated. The usual school routine is gone through, a superficial knowledge of the English branches acquired, a smattering of one or two foreign languages, a little music and drawing, forgotten after a year or

two of married life. Then, after the education is pronounced "finished," comes the *debut* in society, and in a few months perhaps, or years, the end and aim of life is attained — a fashionable wedding is announced. The bride thinking far more of her handsome *trousseau* and her elegant bridal gifts than of the duties and responsibilities she is about to assume. After the bridal tour commences housekeeping — in most cases carried on by the servants. Should the husband prosper in business, life may glide along smoothly in shallow waters. But fortune is such a fickle goddess. Some day, perchance, the sky may be suddenly overcast, black clouds of misfortune may swoop down like great birds of prey descending upon their hapless victims. The husband and father may be cut down by the swift scythe of the Great Reaper in the prime of his life, in the midst of his labors. Fortune gone, friends take a hurried leave, and a helpless woman, with little children clinging to her, wrings her hands in tearless agony, and the cry goes forth, "Oh, Heaven! what can I do?" Memory brings back the careless, thoughtless days of girlhood, and "Oh!" thinks the despairing soul, "could I but have looked forward to this day, I would have been prepared for it — fitted myself for some avocation in life by which I could maintain myself and my children." She makes a mental list of her acquirements. Teaching?— her education has been too super-

ficial for that. Music?—ditto. Drawing?—ditto. Sewing? A good dressmaker earns three dollars a day. Yes, but she understands her business thoroughly, and there has been nothing thorough in this woman's life. An indulged daughter, a petted wife — she is without resources. A boarding-house? Yes, that is the only resort of the decayed gentlewoman. She owns her furniture, and nothing else in the world; so the handsome house is given up and a cheaper one rented, and the delicate lady opens a boarding-house, to succeed, perhaps, if health of body and strength of will shall be equal to the task; if not, to succumb and die, leaving her orphan children to the tender mercies of a selfish world.

Now I believe that any bright, energetic girl is just as capable of learning some particular thing well, as much as I believe that any bright, energetic boy is capable of it. Only impress upon her mind the necessity for it. Teach her to consider it a disgrace to grow up without acquiring some useful occupation or trade, as much as you would teach it to your son. Let it be music, painting, sculpture, book-keeping, dressmaking, millinery — any thing, so that she acquire the art thoroughly.

There is in the city of New York an institution (the Cooper Institute) founded by a noble man, whom women shall rise up and call blessed, where any

woman may receive, free, an education which shall fit her to take a place in the world as a laborer worthy of her hire. No healthy woman need be a drone in the great hive in which she lives.

Whence come so many wretched, ill-assorted marriages? For the reason that half the women marry for homes, and they get houses to shelter them, not homes in the true sense of the word. Home is a place where the heart is at rest, and were girls differently educated they would wait for that *real* home, where "joy is duty and love is law," rather than accept the first man who offers them a good house, and lead henceforth and forever after a life of bitter repining for what might have been, and growing old before their time with the friction which must exist between two natures entirely dissimilar.

There are women—poor, tired souls, wretched from their very infancy—so surrounded and hemmed in by adverse circumstances that education is among the impossibilities—who must still sit with worn fingers and hollow eyes, singing the "Song of the Shirt." To such may heaven be more merciful than man has been, and give them in the hereafter sweet and glorious recompense for lives of toil, and want, and sorrow.

Motherless.

THREE little golden heads at an upper window and a long line of carriages in the street below. Nurse holds baby up, who laughs and claps his little dimpled hands as his eye is caught by the nodding plumes on the hearse; and presently the procession moves down the street, and mother has gone away from her darlings forever.

The men from the undertaker's remove the traces of the funeral; the parlors are in their wonted order, except perhaps the curtains are not looped as gracefully, the furniture is not disposed as tastefully, and the little ornaments and bijouterie are not in their accustomed places. In mother's room there is a chill and a prim air about every thing, so different from its usual look of cosy comfort. A bright June sunlight is gleaming through the half-opened blinds, but it does not seem to give warmth or cheer. The toys are brought out, but the children soon tire of them. There's something gone — they scarce realize what. By-and-by baby begins to fret, and nurse gets cross and puts him in the crib to "cry it out." Poor little darling! mamma's pet! how tenderly she would have soothed him with soft lullabys. And then papa comes home and gathers

the little flock around his knee; and tries to tell them something of the beautiful home to which mamma has gone; but they want her sadly here; they cannot think why the Good Father should want her so much more.

By-and-by the days glide into months, and there is always something wanting in their lives. Their physical needs are cared for, but father is full of business cares. The tender mother-love is gone, and there are none to sympathize in the little joys and sorrows. The proud day comes when baby takes the first step alone, but there's no mother's voice to encourage him, no mother waiting with open arms to catch and half smother him with kisses. Little five-year old Alice comes home from her first day at school, brimful of her new experience, and the number of letters she has learned; but nobody cares to listen to her. Charley comes tearing into the nursery with a rent in his jacket and a black eye, and a story of a big boy who struck him and took his ball away, and the boyish heart swells almost to bursting, but mamma isn't there to bathe the eye, and mend the jacket, and to promise another ball larger and better than the old one, and the little fellow goes softly into her room and lays his head down on her pillow, and cries himself to sleep.

Then after a year or two, perhaps, there's a confusion of painters and paperers, and upholsterers in the house, and the room where the dear one died is newly

furnished, and the old things are sent to the auction store, and it is whispered a new mother is coming; and the children listen and wonder, and presently papa goes away for a few days and comes home in a carriage with a lady beside him, and tells them he has brought them a new mamma, whom he hopes they will love and obey; but they think they cannot love her at all. Their own mamma had a sweet voice, and loving eyes the color of the forget-me-nots in the garden, and this one has great bold eyes, and a cold, haughty face, and she does not kiss them as though she meant it. Papa seems to care more for her than for them, and they go away to the nursery with a dim, vague sense of a loss that can never be made up to them. God pity the motherless.

Fatherless.

NO more watching for the car that brings papa home. No merry shout that announces his arrival, and rush to the gate, and tossing of bundles and papers to the older ones, and tossing in the air and caresses for the little ones.

No scampering into the sitting-room, and cutting of strings, and opening of parcels, to see what papa has

brought to brighten the evening for the loved ones at home.

No patient explanation after tea of that last hateful sum in algebra, over which poor Ned has been worrying half the afternoon, and which the teacher insists *must* be done at home to save himself time and trouble.

No wonderful fairy tale that holds the children breathless while mamma rocks baby to sleep. No romping, rollicking game, down through parlor, hall and dining-room, that drives dull care away, sets cook wondering if there ever was "another sech a man for his childer," and sends them all to bed with hearts as light as childhood's heart should ever be.

No father's eye to glow with pride and pleasure at the quiet growth of manliness in the dear elder son. No father's indulgent smile for the harmless pranks of his mirthful, irrepressible brother. No strong arms to enfold the little sunny head that bears no memory of a father's face. No firm hand, warm heart and strong will to carve for them a place in the world. Instead, a shadowed face and a wistful look in the eyes when other children run to meet "papa," and a recollection growing fainter year by year, of one who did for them what their playmates tell them "papa" is going to do. — when the holidays come with their Christmas trees, gifts, and sleigh rides — when "Fourth of July" sends papas home laden with huge packages from which the

protruding sky rockets proclaim to the gleeful youngsters the secret of their contents — the birth-day, always joyfully celebrated.

Instead, cold and careless words, from those who were once all smiles, suavity and deference. Shaking of wise heads and gloomy prophecies, for the future of boys brought up by a too indulgent mother. Each somersault and bubbling over of mischief and mirth, quoted as an evidence of total depravity in the quick-tempered, warm-hearted, affectionate little lad who would not willfully harm a fly.

And so the years pass on. The lads struggle up into men, to succeed or fail, as the case may be, and none pause to think "what might have been" had they not been written "Fatherless."

Winter in the Suburbs.

OLD winter, after long dallying and coquetting with Autumn, is finally wielding his sceptre with the air of a despot. Our friends in the city, looking out this morning upon their blockaded streets and across into the bed-chambers and breakfast-rooms of their neighbors, are possibly wasting a good deal of commiseration upon the condition of the inhabitants of the suburbs. Wonder how Brown likes the country this weather, remarks

Pater familias Jones as he complacently sips his Mocha and glances over the columns of the *Times*. Spare your pity, good friends, we are not suffering with cold, nor are we snow-bound; furnace and grate make a genial atmosphere within doors, while without the plough is at work along the track of the horse railroad, the steed of iron hourly snorts defiance at obstacles in his path, and the merry jingle of bells all tell that neither business nor pleasure are suspended.

Ah, but these grand old hills across the ice-bound Hudson! How beautiful they are in the early morning! Glorious in all times and seasons! Like most things common to our daily life, I think they are not half appreciated by those familiar with them, but let us go away and sojourn for a time in a level region, how they strike us on our return. We involuntarily reach out our arms to embrace them; our hearts send up a song of praise at beholding them once again. I doubt if half you dwellers in cities know any thing of the beauties of nature in winter; you all rush to the country when the dog star rules, but in the winter, ugh! you shrug your shoulders and shiver at the very thought.

Look from this window, or better still, stand here in the center of the hall and look from all the windows, north, south, east and west. Isn't this pure expanse of white, unsullied snow something beautiful to gaze

upon? See the evergreens thickly sprinkled with the soft flakes, and "The poorest twig on the elm tree is ridged inch-deep with pearl." Now glance farther to the northward and see the lights from the iron works gleaming through the misty air. Were it but a scene in some foreign land, how eloquently we should expatiate upon its beauties.

To the true lover of nature there is as much loveliness in the country in winter as in the budding spring, the blossoming summer, or the gold and russet-tinted autumn. The strength and majesty of the oaks, the graceful outlines of the elms and maples stripped of their verdure, is more clearly defined against the background of the clear winter sky, than in the luxuriance of their summer garb. The sunset hues are as shifting and gorgeous. The pines loom up more grandly through the nudeness of their neighbors. The spruce and the hemlock are like the faces of friends who do not strike their colors when the chill winds of adversity whistle around us. Then what greater happiness to a home-loving nature, than that "tumultuous privacy of storm," of which Emerson has given us so enticing a picture?

What more delightful than a harmonious family seated around a cosy fireside, the curtains drawn, the fire glowing brightly, the table well filled with books, papers and periodicals, a faint perfume from the flowers

in the window floating in the air? Reading, games, the topics of the day discussed. The "mither wi' her needle and her shears," making the "auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;' or softly sing a lullaby to little golden hair, who is striving to keep the blue eyes open just a little longer, to see when Jack Frost comes to make the wonderful pictures on the panes that so delight the little folks in the early dawn.

Then drawing aside the curtain when the children are all quietly at rest, and looking from the cheery room out into the darkness and storm, we shall some of us remember the "gradual patience" which has come to us "flake by flake," through many a weary day, when the storm of sorrow beat upon our heads, swaying us in the blast, but failing to uproot our faith that still,

"Beneath the winter's snow
Lie germs of summer flowers."

Making Shavings.

WHAT are you doing, Charlie?" asked a visitor of my little four year old boy, who, with flushed face and tired hands, was working busily with his new set of tools.

"Trying to make a shaving," sobbed the little fel-

low, worn out with his unsuccessful efforts to accomplish the wonderful feat.

I have often recalled my little boy's remark in the years that have passed since that day, and wondered if we are not all more or less engaged in making shavings. Statesmen, lawyers, merchants, mechanics, laborers, high and low, great and small, rich and poor, all are hurrying toward a common goal. There is no time to stop; the great end must be attained, friendship must be sacrificed, social intercourse, the pleasures of domestic life, taste, culture, travel, each must be set aside until a more convenient season. Love is but a myth, well enough for poets to sing and women to dream of; and home is but a place to dine and sleep in. By-and-by, when fortune and fame are reached, will be time enough to renew friendships, to enjoy family ties, to take rest and recreation.

So on we go, the men rushing foremost, the women trying to stifle their starved souls in the mad pursuit of fashion, each making frantic endeavor to outdo the other in folly and extravagance, and the children (bless them) bringing up the rear, striving to the best of their small abilities to emulate the worthy example of their illustrious elders.

By-and-by comes a messenger, urgent, swift, and sure, whom there is no putting off till a more convenient season — time to stop now. What has been

gained? what left behind? Only a pile of shavings, to be burned perhaps, or scattered to the winds.

Nothing but Rags.

IT was one of those grand old mansions which had been gradually losing caste for nearly a quarter of a century, and while the world of fashion had been quietly changing its locality, it had become that most forlorn and unsightly object in a great city — a down town tenement house, with neglected looking children swarming around the door, and shrill-voiced women leaning out the windows once draped with lace and damask, scolding the children or chatting with a passing neighbor.

High up in one of the attic rooms of the old house sat a girl whose appearance was so entirely above her surroundings, that even the coarse, loud-voiced women in the rooms below involuntarily lowered their tones as she passed their doors, and wondered what strange freak of fortune had cast so fair a flower into the hard soil so ill suited to its delicate nature. The small room was scrupulously neat; the walls hung with a cheap paper of delicate pattern and tint; curtains at the window looped back with cherry-colored bow; ivy, geranium, and heliotrope as bright and fragrant as if grown

in the finest conservatory; a small, white-draped bed, an easy chair with cushions of cheap damask, a table covered with the same material, a shelf of books, one fine engraving handsomely framed, a relic of other days, a tiny parlor cook-stove polished until you could see your face in it, a little closet containing a few cooking utensils and a dozen or so pieces of rare old china, another relic; a small oval mirror, another small closet containing a scanty wardrobe; "only this and nothing more" were the possessions of the girl who sits by the window early this Thanksgiving morning, darning for the fortieth time an old black silk dress, fortunately of the richest and heaviest quality, or it would have long ago succumbed to the cutting and slashing of that merciless old scythe which father time so remorselessly swings as he stalks over all that is fairest and brightest in his onward flight.

"Rags! rags! Nothing but rags!" soliloquized the pretty lips. "Ah! poor old dress, we little thought the day you came home fresh and new, of the years we should keep each other company, and the changes we should see. My birth-day, too! twenty-four to-day! Four years ago I sat at the head of my father's sumptuous table, surrounded by his guests. Dear old father! how proud he was of me, his only child — his motherless child, he called me. But was not he both father and mother? Then in one short year came the

crash that swept every thing before it and brought my dear old father's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. But better so, perhaps, than toil and poverty in his old age. I have youth and strength, and can surely earn a living for myself. If only Howard had been true! That is the bitterest drop in my cup of sorrow. A year, a whole long year, and not a word from him. Well, well, old dress, I think that you will do now, and we must go to church once more together, for is it not Thanksgiving? and after all, have we not much to be thankful for? With the few music scholars, and the bits of embroidery, and helping Madame Shamwell in hurried times, we have managed so far to keep the wolf from the door, and Heaven helps those who help themselves. Never fear, old dress; we shall get through the woods with a few tears and scratches, and when you have a successor you shall be made into a pretty quilt, with stripes of blue, and shall stay by me as long as I live."

A very pretty, elegant-looking young lady emerged from the tenement house in ——— street. A close inspection might have disclosed neatly-mended gloves, carefully varnished shoes, a dress that had seen its best days; but the *tout ensemble* was elegant, and the graceful figure and refined face would attract more than a passing glance.

"Where shall I go," mentally inquires our young

lady. "To ——— avenue, to the fashionable church we used to attend, just for once, to see how many of the old set will recognize me," she decides, and taking a car, she soon enters with something of a tremor, it must be confessed, a sanctuary where the *élite* of the city congregate to worship.

She has not the courage to take a conspicuous seat, but glides quietly into the nearest vacant pew. She hears not one word of the brief discourse. Memory is busy with the past. Phantoms of vanished joys rise before her tear-dimmed eyes. The choir is chanting a sweet old hymn. The pew-door softly opens, and she feels rather than sees a gentleman take a seat near her. The service ends, and drawing her vail closely down, she turns to go, but a hand is reached out to her, and a dear, familiar voice whispers:

"Marion!"

For one instant her heart ceases beating, but many eyes are upon them, and pride comes to the rescue. She calmly gives her hand as to an old friend, and walks out by his side.

Yes, it is Howard Walling, and a few minutes suffice to explain the silence of a year. A fever in a foreign land, that long delayed the time of departure, letters miscarried, a fruitless search on his return in the places that had once known her but knew her no more, and at last happiness, and a visit to the minister at

once. Not a day, not an hour would he wait. The *trousseau*, so dear to the heart of the bride, must come afterward. Happiness is too precious a boon to be risked in this world of mistakes, partings and misunderstandings. Vulgarly speaking, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. He had his bird in the hand, and he meant to keep her there.

Well, the end of it was, the pretty girl who left the old tenement house two hours before with a brave but sad heart, thinking she had not a friend in the wide world, entered it on the arm of a most devoted and happy-looking husband. A *recherché* dinner was ordered from the nearest restaurant, for Mrs. Howard Walling insisted upon taking her first Thanksgiving dinner after her marriage in her own house.

Mother's Hour.

"'Tis late at night, and in the realms of sleep
My little lambs are folded like the flocks."

IN the bed two sturdy lads, tired with play, are sleeping peacefully, while visions of snow forts and sledding, pop-guns and pistols, drums, swords and soldier caps are mingled with spelling-books and arithmetic, slates and pencils, black-boards and school discipline. On the crib pillow a little cherub face is lying, framed in a tangle of golden curls, the chubby hands

holding tightly a whip and a trumpet, the last, and, therefore, the most precious acquisition to the baby treasures.

And now comes mother's hour for repairing the damages of the day. Here a patch, and there a darn, a button in this place, a string in that. "Here, Katey, blacken the shoes, and a little varnish for baby's." Now empty the pockets. Four rusty nails, a circus bill, one box percussion caps, two nine-pins, a card, three stones, one iron ring, one piece rattan, marbles, balls of worsted and twine, pop-corn, one horse shoe, dirt, and old papers. And now all is ready for another day, and the next night the work must be done over again, and the next, and the next; but, mothers, don't complain, for long as we may for rest, and quiet, and leisure, these are our best days, and the time will come all too soon when our little children will be grown up and leave the home nest to make their own way in the world, to struggle and work, to succeed or to fail, as the case may be.

The house will be very quiet and very neat then. No more "picking up," no stockings to darn, no knees to patch, no buttons to sew on, no little sticky hands to mark windows, and doors, and furniture; no curls to smooth, no faces to wash. Then we shall have leisure for all the things we think we should like to do. We can read and write, visit and travel, go and come,

as we please. Ah! but there will be no dear little faces at the window watching for us, no little feet hurrying down the stairs to see what mother has brought; and I do not look forward with any pleasure to that time; I want to hold fast to every day. Each day is more precious than gold that I have my little children around me; and sometimes, when I hear of an entire family being removed from this world by some accident or casualty — some "mysterious dispensation of Providence"— I think what a happy fate. All safely together, where no change, no sorrow, no parting shall ever come — where "Love's precious chain is not tarnished nor riven."

Then, mothers, do not fret, and worry, and grow "nervous" at the demands made upon your time and patience. Let us try to be happy, and to make the children happy, not by a weak pampering and indulgence, but by giving them something to do that will interest them, and by interesting ourselves in their pursuits and pleasures; and you, mothers, who are so blessed as to have no vacant seats around your hearths, no tiny shoes nor little tress of sunny hair to weep over, no clothes hanging in the closet that will never be worn again, no drawer filled with memories of a sweet young life that has gone out forever from your homes — when you are inclined to think your children a trouble and an annoyance, consider for a moment

how your lives would be shattered if the fiat should go forth, "Those angels are not thine."

A Tour Among the Housekeepers.

FIRST upon our list stands the name of Mrs. Shrew, and we take a hurried, trembling survey of the mansion as we ascend its irreproachably clean steps. A blank, chilly looking exterior, windows glistening from a recent polishing, white shades from basement to attic, each drawn on an exact line with the upper part of the lower sash; no relief of drapery, nor plant, nor vine, nor baby fingers drumming on the panes — the one catches dust, the others make dirt. But taking "our life in our hand" we make the acquaintance of this wiry, rasping creature, whose nerves appear by some freak of nature to have been placed outside the cuticle, subject to the wear and tear of every adverse wind that blows, and the adverse winds blow almost continually around her dwelling. Husband, children and servants are made wretched in the vain attempt to keep carpets, furniture and wearing apparel in an immaculate condition. No vagrant cat, nor dog, dare so much as thrust a nose through the area railing. No child must whittle, cut papers, sharpen pencils, nor make litter of any kind within those four square walls.

In pleasant weather the dust is a constant annoyance, on a rainy day the mud is still more intolerable, and woe to the unlucky wight who enters those doors without spending a quarter of an hour at mat and scraper.

Next comes the name of Mrs. Fuss, who is seldom seen without her sleeves turned up and head enveloped in a handkerchief, sweeping, dusting, scrubbing, baking, boiling, stewing. She comes to the table in an untidy dress, a patch of flour on her nose, a smutch of pot black on her hand, the perspiration streaming from her face. Her mind never soars above the level of her daily cares, and family and friends are entertained with the all-absorbing topic.

Just across the street in a house with tattered, dingy looking lace curtains at the windows, and a slovenly, good-natured looking housemaid standing in the door, we pay our respects to Mrs. Slipshod, the easy, careless housekeeper, whose family and servants are left to their own devices. She rises late in the morning, does her hair up à la chinoise, slips on a wrapper, minus a collar, thrusts her feet into an old pair of husband's slippers, and her morning toilet is complete.

Breakfast is served in the same easy, informal style. Husband hastily swallows a cup of sloppy coffee, partly masticates a bit of tough steak and a doughy buckwheat cake, and hastens to his office in a limp, buttonless shirt, a coat with a rip in the shoulder and the

buttons worn through, fingers protruding through his gloves, and the toes of his stockings in a condition that, were they visible, would throw Mrs. Shrew into convulsions of horror — (par parenthèse). Is it any wonder that Jones, his sleek, jolly-looking bachelor friend, gives a half-suppressed chuckle as he passes him, and inwardly congratulates himself on having escaped the matrimonial noose? Next, Mary, Bessie and Johnny and Tommy and Charlie, are hustled off to school, shoe-strings hanging, hands smeared with syrup, and rents in dresses and jackets drawn together with a convenient pin. When all are fairly out of the way Mrs. Slipshod, with a sigh of relief, gives an order or two to cook and chambermaid, and sinking into the comfortable depth of an easy chair, passes the time until dinner, alternately napping and reading the last novel by that charming author, Frothiana Fitzbubble.

To rest our tired nerves let us make our last call upon that *rara avis* who combines the useful with the beautiful, the practical with the poetical, the sweet, bright, cheery soul, who makes home the dearest spot on earth; whose husband adores her, whose children are never so happy as in the safe, warm nest under the mother wing; whose friends find her always serene, sympathetic and cordial; whose house is in dainty and exquisite order without hurry or fuss; whose hair is never frowsy and dress "not fit to be seen;" who has

time for reading, music, lectures, concerts, and still can be that being so essential to the comfort of a home—a good housekeeper.

Mr. Mushroom.

HE is perhaps the most entirely self-satisfied person in the universe. No noble longings of the spirit disturb the placid flow of his existence; his soul is never stirred to a glorious ardor in the grand marches of life. Enthusiasm on any subject is, in his opinion, decidedly vulgar.

In early life engaged in some humble but useful calling, he was modest, civil and obliging, but he has been prosperous beyond his expectations, the wheel of fortune in its revolutions has borne him gently and gradually upward; or, he has made some fortunate venture which has suddenly lifted him from the mire of poverty into the lap of luxury.

In prosperity he waxeth pompous, becometh wise in his own conceit, and inflated after the manner of a small air baloon, which escaping from the hands of its possessor goes soaring away, imagining itself another world sailing through space. Many who have aided and encouraged him with their influence and their means have by some sudden jerk or disarrangement of

the machinery, which keeps this wonderful wheel in motion, been thrown to the ground. Does the recipient of their favors with sympathetic face and ready hand reach down to help them regain a seat? Never! Nobility abideth not in the soul of the Mushroom, and gratitude is a stranger to his breast. Money is his God and moneyed men his idols. Let not the unfortunate look to him for sympathy, much less for aid. "Every man for himself," is his motto. In religion he professes that which is most fashionable, and attends church where wife and daughter will make the acquaintance of the most distinguished of the élite of society. In politics he advocates the side which is the most popular, and will farthest advance his own interests, He looks down from his lofty eminence upon people of gentle birth, and breeding, culture and refinement, not noticing the quiet, half-amused, half-contemptuous smile with which they pass him. In his home are gathered all the luxuries that money can command; a profusion of mirrors, gilding, frescoing, rosewood and brocatelle, the very latest style of furniture and garnishing throughout. One can easily imagine himself in a first-class upholsterer's warerooms, nothing cheap nor common, nor mean, from attic to basement. Nothing whatever—except the soul of the owner, that is so cheap, so common, so mean, so infinitesimal, that it will take ages of eternity to develop it into a sense of

its own littleness. Ah, Mr. Mushroom! would that some power the gift would give you to see yourself as others see you.

Ticking of the Watch.

HAVE you ever lain at the solemn hour of midnight, or later, in the "wee sma' hours" when all the household were slumbering, with wide open, sleepless eyes, thinking of some departed joy, regretting some mistake, grieving over some misunderstanding, or by some strange, cruel fascination of self-torture, tearing open some old wound to bleed afresh that all through the busy day is kept securely bandaged? And then, when thought has grown intolerable, has your attention suddenly been arrested by the ticking of the watch underneath your pillow? Tick, tick, tick, faster almost than you can count—tick, tick, tick. And did you think with what wonderful rapidity the seconds are flying off into minutes, the minutes into hours, the hours into days, the days into weeks, the weeks into months, the months into years? And in a little while it is all over, all the heat and the burden, the restless strivings, the heart aches, the perished hopes and ambitions, all laid aside. Oh! but happiness is such a glorious thing we say, and our hands

tremble and grow feverish with a longing to grasp it. One moment it is just within our reach, the next, a breath of air tosses it away — away from our outstretched hands, and we sigh and moan over our disappointment, and chafe, and worry, and fret under the discipline. We cannot see the good of all the chiseling we undergo, and we can only hope and believe that we shall finally come from the hand of the great Sculptor noble and symmetrical in our development—when the soul's "mortal longings, its baffled hopes, shall become dim in the light of those infinite longings, which spread over it, soft and holy as dawn."

Children, Sunshine, Shadows.

CHILDREN all love the sunlight, and turn to it as naturally as the flowers lift their dewy petals to catch the first ray of the morning sun as it peeps over the garden wall. How wistfully the little faces look out of the window on a stormy day, wondering why it cannot always be pleasant weather. But "some days must be dark and dreary," so the poet Longfellow tells us, and so we have all learned by experience. But cannot the little boys and girls make sunshine in the house when the heavens are clouded and the rain is falling outside?

We are all very much inclined to take the good things God gives us as a matter of course, and to fret and worry over the little inconveniences that spring up in our pathway; but, by-and-by, as we grow older, some real trouble comes upon us, some great calamity befalls us, and then how trifling seem all those little ills we made so much of. Ah! if we could only go back just a little in the path we have been traveling, we should gather the flowers more gratefully, and not mind the pricking of a little thorn occasionally.

Dear children, do not sulk and look cross because you cannot always do just what pleases you, but keep a sunny face, and try to gather happiness from little things, from birds, flowers and music. The world is full of beauty; keep your eyes and your hearts open to receive it. Do not think that wealth and fine clothes and society are the only desirable things in life. Each is well enough in its place, but sometimes wealth takes wings, and society flies with it. And then, if we have no resources within ourselves, life becomes a burden indeed.

Shall I tell you one of the things that in my daily life affords me a world of quiet enjoyment? It is this —only a box of flowers outside a large arched window. Over it is a wire trellis, placed there by one who can do nothing more for my pleasure in this world. And every spring I set out my roses and geraniums, fragrant

heliotrope and mignonette, and sow mórning glories; and when the soft south wind stirs the leaves and flowers, I often fancy I hear echoes of gentle voices in the air, and all through the summer this little box of flowers gives me sweet and pleasant thoughts.

Then I can look off over acres of waving grass, and see pretty cottages and handsome mansions embowered in foliage, and lie on my lounge when I return from the city, tired of its hot, noisy streets, and gaze upon grand old hills that seem like dear and familiar friends, whether in their garb of summer verdure or winter snow, and in either they are equally dear and beautiful.

Cultivate a taste for nature; and if you live in a close and crowded city, have a few flowers in your window, and see how much pleasure it will give you to watch the unfolding of leaf and bud and blossom. Sometimes watch the white clouds drifting over the clear blue sky, and fancy them pure and loving spirits floating away from earth to a brighter home, whose waters are clearer, blossoms sweeter, and music softer than human senses can conceive. If you are so fortunate as to be taken for the summer months to some quiet retreat in the country, enjoy every moment of your blessed freedom from city restraints and trammels. And you, children, whose lot it is to be reared in the pure atmosphere of a country home, thank hea-

ven for the privilege, and never foolishly long for the shams and gauds of a city life.

Bask in the sunshine while you may — sit in the shadows when you must.

Crape on the Door.

OF the stately mansion and the humble cottage — the abode of wealth and luxury and the unpretending home of the mechanic. In one the fashionable undertaker comes with quiet step, and arranges, regardless of expense, a funeral that shall do credit to his establishment, and shall in all respects be worthy the illustrious dead. Hot-house flowers have been ordered at a price that would keep the wolf a whole year from the homes of a dozen poor families in the next street, the coffin is magnificent in velvet, and silver mountings; the mourners have scarce had time to think of the dead lying in state in the darkened parlors, orders to milliners and dressmakers and the fitting of crape and bombazine, have kept them in such a whirl. But finally all is arranged after the most approved and latest style, a studied and eloquent eulogy is pronounced and the stately and imposing pageant moves slowly toward the "Silent City."

Just around the corner, from the door of an humble

dwelling starts another funeral. A few simple comforting words have been spoken, a short prayer offered. It consists of a plain coffin and hearse, a carriage or two, and a procession formed by a few true-hearted friends with sad faces. Underneath the coffin-lid a white rose and two or three tiny buds, placed in the dear hand by wife and little children. Down the street moves the little cortege, waiting at the crossing for the hearse of the rich man, with nodding plumes, and the long line of carriages to pass. Onward they go, one to a stately tomb, the other to an humble grave, where a broken-hearted wife and children shall often come to weep bitter tears and lay a little offering of simple flowers.

And what of these souls that went, each alone, on its journey? Wealth availed nothing to the rich man in the hour when death took him by the hand; love could not follow the poor man across that deep river which separates the visible from the invisible, yet perchance that humble man, with toil-hardened hands and care-worn face, stands to-day transfigured, glorified, far, far above the one who, perhaps, used his wealth for the advancement of his own selfish schemes and the gratification of his sensual appetites. Heaven knows who are the truly rich, and pities with an infinite pity and tenderness the sorrowing heart that has "crape on the door," whether among the wealthy or the lowly.

Other People's Boys.

I HAVE made the assertion elsewhere and I repeat it: I have a weakness for boys. In juvenile vernacular I don't go back on the boys; yet all things have a limit and it is possible to get a surfeit of the good things of this world. When one's yard is filled with an amateur circus company, and one's trees and racks are converted into seats for spectators; when the front steps present a goodly array of youth engaged in the exciting pastime of plastering the pavement and other convenient objects, with clay which has been moistened and worked over with praiseworthy industry until the proper degree of stickiness has been attained; when one's neck has become permanently twisted from much stretching to see that one's offspring are not being led into paths wherein lurk snares and pitfalls; when the summer evening is made hideous by unearthly howls and the tramping of a multitude of feet; when home is no longer a synonym of peace but a place of rendezvous for the larger portion of the youthful masculine element within a quarter of a square mile; when parents shirk all responsibility of looking after their own, and are quite comfortable and content so long as their restless boys are out of the

house and do not trouble them; then life becomes a weariness and a burden, and we sigh for a lodge in some vast wilderness, or a home on the rolling deep.

We give the subject hours of perplexed consideration, and arrive at no satisfactory solution of the difficult question, not "what shall we do with our boys," which has been recently discussed in a series of articles by Mr. Charles Barnard, but what shall we do with the boys of our neighbors? We read somewhere, years ago, of an infant exterminator. A long suffering person, wrought up to the highest pitch of human endurance, constructed an apparatus which was swiftly and silently dropped from an upper window, the offending innocent drawn up, quietly throttled and as swiftly and silently deposited on terra-firma until all the innocents in that locality were exterminated, and peace and quietness reigned throughout that region. We have never received a call from the agent of a patent infant exterminator, and so we presume, like many another valuable invention, it has been lost to the world, and "what shall we do with other people's boys?" still remains an open question.

A Joyful Thanksgiving.

IT was Thanksgiving Eve. The short, bright afternoon had merged into twilight, and twilight had been succeeded by moonlight, the only light that brightened the little room in which Mrs. Arnold sat, holding in her lap her little six-year old daughter, save, perhaps, a faint glimmer from a low fire that was half-smouldering in a small cook-stove, for it was necessary to economize coals while the mild weather lasted, in order to keep comfortable when the biting cold should come.

The relentless wolf was at the door, with his ugly paw upon the latch, just ready to enter. It was only by strenuous efforts that he had been kept at bay so long. One by one the little keepsakes and relics of better days had found their way to the pawnbroker's, until but one remained, a jeweled locket, containing on one side the pictured face of a noble-looking man, on the other a lock of raven hair.

"Mamma," said little Nellie, raising her curly head from its resting-place, "tell me about Thanksgiving before papa died. Did we live in a nice house, with pretty curtains, and flowers in the windows, and bright lights in the evening like those we pass sometimes?

And did papa bring home a great turkey, and oranges, and nice things, the way other little girls' papas do?"

"Yes, darling." And tears fell softly on the sunny curls. "We had a bright, happy home, and papa did every thing that other papas do — brought so many nice things for mamma and his little girl, and was so proud and happy. But cannot my little girl remember the dear papa a little — just a very little?"

"Yes; I remember when we rode, and papa let me drive sometimes, and a great black man came and took the horse away to the stable, and — and that is all."

Then silence fell in the little room, and memory was busy recalling the golden hours of the past. One by one the years rose up and glided by in shadowy procession. First the phantom of a petted only daughter, the pride and darling of four older brothers, all dead save one, and he a wanderer in distant lands, ignorant, no doubt, of his sister's misfortunes, as letter after letter had failed to bring a reply. Next an idolized wife. Parents are called to that land where want and sorrow are unknown, yet the tender care of a devoted husband supplies every need of her heart, and the natural sorrow soon gives place to a gentle regret.

Then comes the thought of the wretched present, and all the blessed and blissful Thanksgiving Eves of her life rise up in contrast to this — a half-furnished, comfortless room, in a very ordinary tenement house, a pinched fire,

no light; the one bright spot the little sunny head resting in blissful unconsciousness on her bosom.

She gently and carefully disrobes the little sleeping figure and lays her in the bed, then prepares for a walk in the frosty evening air. Quickly she removes the lock of raven hair which clings lovingly, it seems, around her fingers, takes the pictured face from its resting-place, kisses it almost frantically, wraps both in paper, and places them in her bosom. Then, taking the locket, she presses her lips to the warm, rosy cheek of her darling, and closing the door quietly, walks rapidly toward the place which has become so familiar to her of late, and whose sign is three brazen balls.

Alas! and alas! how many trembling, shrinking figures have passed within these doors! Want and misery have set their seal on each wretched soul that enters.

Very smiling and unctious is the corpulent pawnbroker as he greets his victim, for well he knows that a good bargain awaits him.

"Good evening, madame. You've some more little trinket you will sell? Oh! ah! only a locket — not much worth. How mooch you want? I gif you two dollar, as you are an old customer, and I make notting — not five cent, I assure you. It is valuable? Oh, not much worth, I gif you my word. Well, well, I gif you five dollar. I don't like to see a pretty lady in trouble, and I lose money — I do, indeed."

Poor soul! she takes the pittance with a weary sigh, and the door closes after her with a bang. She goes half dazed and wretched through the streets, buys a bit of cheap meat for the Thanksgiving dinner, an orange for her darling, looks at the tempting dainties in the windows, and wonders, if she cannot get work, what will become of them, now her last resource is gone.

She mounts the three long flights of stairs that lead to her miserable room. A bright fire is shining through the crevices of the door. Great Heaven! has the child awakened, and, trying to get a light, set fire to the room?

She throws open the door, and finds — only a kerosene lamp, furnished by a neighbor; but — astounding sight! a tall, bronzed and bearded gentleman rises from her rickety rocking-chair, with darling little Nellie wrapped in a blanket, clinging to his neck. Can she be dreaming? What does it mean?

"Sister, dear, dear sister, have I found you at last, and in such a place as this?"

She stretches out her arms, totters and falls, but joy seldom proves fatal. The happy trio are soon sitting by the little cook-stove, which is heaped to the very top with a glowing mass of coals, and care, and suffering, and anxiety are things of the past.

On the morrow, in one of the finest hotels in the

city, little Nellie spends the happiest day, and eats the best dinner she ever remembers, and every family in that tenement house has a turkey, and all the accompaniments that go to make a first-class Thanksgiving dinner.

Summer Friends.

ONE of our modern essay writers says:

"You can have every thing on earth you want when you don't need any thing."

Like many another disappointed soul she had probably learned this fact from sad experience. When we are prosperous, how friends swarm around us, like bees around a honey-laden flower. How we are flattered, petted and caressed — we can have every thing on earth we want—by paying for it. How "all the sheaves bow down to our sheaf." How frequent are the invitations to ride, because, forsooth, we have a carriage of our own. How numerous are the cards to lectures, concerts, operas, because we have a husband, father or brother ready and willing to escort us. How attentive the clerks in Yardstick & Co.'s fashionable emporium! The butcher, the grocer — how smiling, how affable, how obliging. How profound the bows, how bland the smiles, that greet us while taking an afternoon

drive. How pleasant to know we have such friends should misfortune overtake us, should a dark cloud dim the brightness of our heaven. How they would gather around us, each striving to outdo the other in consoling, in helping us to regain our footing.

There's a rumble in the distance, a cloud gathering, darker and darker, a crash, and our brilliant sky is black as midnight. We grope blindly, we look vainly for one ray of light in the darkness. Where are the friends of yesterday, the ones *we* have succored in *their* day of need, sustained in their affliction, and given of the best treasures of our hearts and lives? Where, indeed? Echo answers — where? In their stead we receive a few notes of condolence, a few formal calls, the stereotyped remark:

"If there is any thing we can do for you, let us know."

Perhaps some little favor asked of an old friend is met with a grave face and demurring voice, which sends us flying home with a bitterness in our hearts too deep for words or tears. Truly we can have every thing on earth we want when we don't need any thing, and when we do, heaven help us.

Independence Day and the Little Ones.

BOOM, boom, bang! Pop, fizzle, bang! The day of orations, fire crackers, and burnt fingers, green fruit, root beer and cholera morbus, pop-guns and pistols is here at last. How the months have been counted by the juveniles, beginning as soon as the holidays were well over, and Santa Claus and Christmas trees had become joys of the past. And then the weeks, and finally the days, until that last day but one arrives, when cautious papas and mammas are begged and implored, and entreated with the most solemn assurances of their careful and discreet handling for powder crackers, torpedoes, rockets, Roman candles—any thing, every thing that will make the loudest possible noise.

Then, "early to bed and early to rise" is a maxim that is cheerfully practiced for once in the year, and "you must wake and call me early—call me early, mother dear," is the last sound that issues from the nursery. At various times through the "wee sma' hours" is heard the inquiry, "Mamma, is it almost morning?" and before the birds have had time to proclaim the dawn, there's a hurrying on of stockings and shoes,

pants and jackets. No matter about the buttons; never mind looking up the hats — that can be done by and by. And then commences the day's doings. Bang! goes a great big cracker first to inaugurate the day; then the small ones come in to do the popping, or, if they refuse to "pop," they must be made to "sizzle" (I think that's the right word. Isn't it, boys?)

Then mamma picks up things, and brings order out of the confusion, and while the house is quiet sits down for a moment to think; and, perhaps, her thoughts are busy with the past, and her eyes are full of unshed tears, for these anniversaries are often fraught with sad memories to the elder members of the household. Perhaps she is thinking of a darling child, who was wont to welcome the day as gladly as his brothers did this year—of the bright, sweet face, the quick feet running up the stairs for "more crackers and punk." And then thought in an instant carries her up to the beautiful "God's acre" beside a simple marble headstone, whereon is written "Our Noble Boy," and the tears refuse to be held back any longer. But the children are out, and it don't matter, and she will not bring a cloud over the sunshine of their day by speaking of the dear older brother, who was first in all their sports just a few short years ago, and who to-day is

> "Out of reach, beyond kiss, in the clay
> Where the violets press nearer than we."

The angels love those who love little children. Let us make them happy, especially on all holidays, entering heartily into their plans for enjoyment, not spoiling half their pleasure by giving grudgingly the few pence, shillings or dollars which our means will allow for their gratification. Let us rather make some personal sacrifice than disappoint them, for the remembrance of a free and joyous childhood is something to be carried with us through the checkered scenes of after years, and often proves the sole oasis in the desert of many lives.

The News Boy.

TIMES! *Evening Times! Post! Journal!* Have a *Times*, sir? Only three cents."

"Get out with your papers."

Oh, you mean old curmudgeon, if I had only one-tenth of your money wouldn't I buy the whole bundle and send that little, ragged, freckle-faced chap home rejoicing? Don't I know that just as likely as not that little fellow has got a sick mother at home, and a drunken father, or no father at all, and a little tired sister, whose arms ache from carrying a heavy baby all day? And don't I know just how that miserable room looks, with its broken chairs and its patched windows

and the old table and rickety closet, with only part of a loaf of bread in it to feed all those mouths, just as well as if I had been there?

Oh, Mr. Millionaire, if I had your money wouldn't I buy out the whole stock of shoe-strings of all the boys on the corners, and all the bouquets of every little wistful-eyed girl that I met, and all the papers of the raggedest boys on the street, and make a big bonfire for their amusement? And haven't I seen many a little fellow, with a generosity that might shame you, sir, spend a penny or two of his day's earnings at a fruit stand and divide the purchase with two or three of his less successful comrades?

Unlike the amiable and sweet-tempered Miss Murdstone, who, as a general thing, didn't like boys, I think, "as a general thing," I do like them. If there's any thing in the world I have a weakness for it is for boys (blessings on them, if one could only keep them boys); and when the holidays come, with such a world of happiness to the more fortunate, and I see these little half-frozen urchins, with hands thrust in their ragged pockets, looking in the windows of the toy-shops at the treasures so dear to the hearts of children, how I long to take every one of them in and buy a sled, a knife, or a pair of skates, or a book of wonderful pictures and fairy tales, and make all the poor little hearts glad for one day, at least. Heaven bless you, little news-

boy, and all other little half-starved souls who sometimes, like older people, wonder why the good things of this world are so unequally distributed. There are people who pass you in the streets with pitying hearts, although you do not know it, and one who loved little children said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

I Have No Friends to Speak of.

"TELL me of your friends," said a nurse in one of the crowded wards of a city hospital, where a poor Magdalene lay dying, a fair, frail young girl with wasted form and mournful dark eyes. "I have no friends to speak of," came from the pallid lips, and great tears rolled down the sunken cheeks. Ah, poor erring one! far more sinned against than sinning, where is he who won the love of your girlish heart to while away an idle hour, who enticed you from your peaceful country home to the great city and then flung away the heart that would have endured all things for his sake, leaving it maddened with the agony of betrayal? Oh, vile, selfish libertine! In a home surrounded by every luxury that wealth can procure, flattered and caressed by the people who refused your victim the place of the lowest menial in their service, and turned her into the street to the mercy of others of your class; petted by

mothers with marriagable daughters and adored by the brainless flirts of society who draw their immaculate skirts about them in passing the victim of your lust. Riding serenely in your carriage, dispensing bows and smiles to the belles of society, paying your devotions here and there, dropping an old love when it has become stale, and satiating for a fresher one, your idol to-day, an outcast to-morrow.

Oh, wretch! who sits in high places, you are like a whited sepulchre, fair to look upon, but rotten within, and so surely as the heaven's arch above us, your day of recompense shall come.

> "Oh it was pitiful, in a whole city full;
> Home she had none."

No kind father's hand to lift the dying head, no tender mother's eyes to receive the last dying look, no brother's nor gentle sister's tears shed beside the dying bed. Poor, weak, erring, tired soul, whose earthly course is nearly run. One who knows our weakness, and our temptations, and judges more mercifully than we judge one another, has said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

> "Lift her up tenderly, take her with care,
> Fashioned so slenderly, young and so fair."

She has gone where never more shall the words be breathed from pallid lips, "I have no friends to speak of."

The Practical Woman.

THE thoroughly practical woman is destitute of imagination. Not a shred of such cobwebs as poetry, sentiment or romance, ever lingers in her brain. She is a good housekeeper, in the common usage of the term, tears up carpets every spring, fills the house with painters, carpenters, and paper hangers, scrubs paint and whitens ceilings, scolds children and servants, and finishes at night with a candle lecture, because Mr. Jones came home late and forgot to see the plumber about those new faucets for the bath-room.

The autumn comes with gorgeous hues, and mist-crowned hills, and purple sunsets, but to the mind of the practical woman it brings only visions of pickling, canning and preserving.

She reads the daily papers — certainly all the marriages, deaths, murders and casualties — but she cannot tell you the title of one of Dickens' works, or of Longfellow's or Whittier's poems. She prides herself upon her firmness. When she says "No," always means it, and uses that negative invariably when any scheme of pleasure is proposed. Her will is law in the household, and her husband is influenced to her own narrow views of life, or driven to seek sympathy outside of home.

Motherhood has no sacred meaning, children are in the way, and brought up because it is inevitable. She thinks much of the accumulation of money and a safe investment. Her mind seldom soars above the level of her daily cares and duties, and her friends are regaled with a recital of her numerous trials, perplexities, aches and ills.

She attends church regularly with her children, and dozes over a religious book on the Sabbath afternoon. She reviles her neighbor, who trains vines over her porch, and who dances and plays croquet with her children, and makes home an earthly paradise to her husband, as light-minded and frivolous — a mere "Frou-Frou," not dreaming that poor little "Frou-Frou," with her feminine longing for admiration and love, is a more truly spirituelle woman than herself — a woman of finer sympathies and intuitions, of a warmer heart, a sweeter, more lovable nature.

Practical common sense is an excellent quality, yet it does not form a perfect female character, unless blended with imagination and those gentle qualities without which a woman's nature is sterile and unlovable.

The Little Hearse.

WE have seen that little white hearse pass and repass our door for many a year with its precious freight — carrying up many a mother's idol and returning empty. And oh! how we have mourned with those stricken mothers, thinking of the empty cribs where sunny heads once rested, of the half-worn shoes, the broken toys, the drawer filled with little garments to be taken out and moistened with bitter tears, but never again to press the fair, plump limbs of the little darling.

But we never thought that little hearse could stop at our door — could carry away one of our precious ones — our bright, blue-eyed darlings. But at last it came and took from our arms a little winsome baby, just learning to lisp "mamma," and our crib was empty. Oh! those weary days, those dreadful nights, when we wandered, with empty arms, through the house, wondering why God would not take us, too, thinking our work was done, there was nothing worth living for, and still we had other little ones looking to us for love and care.

So twelve months passed — the little white hearse stopped again at our door, taking our bright, beautiful boy, our first-born, the promise, the joy, the glory of

our lives, snatched away with scarce a warning. This bright afternoon of early summer I sit at my window and look at the flowers he used to tend; the cherry tree he loved to climb; his books are lying on the table; his clothes are hanging in the closet, the ball in one pocket, the port-monnaie in another; and I wonder if my big boy is never coming back to me. I look at the door half expecting to see the bright face flash in. I listen to hear the bounding step on the stair. And, God help me! I think of many an impatient word that is like a knife in my heart now, and I long with a longing that none but a mother's heart can know to take him in my arms — to lay his head on my breast — to ask him to forgive me. Oh! mothers be patient with your little ones, and you who have no broken links in your circle think how soon one of those dear ones, who sometimes worry and fret you, may be called to a higher school, where no regrets, no longing, can bring them back to grant the forgiveness you would so gladly ask, for some hasty word or act which brought tears to the bright eyes now closed forever. And mothers who are weeping over little garments made last year for little robust bodies now gone for ever from your sight — mothers standing by little graves over which the myrtle twines — thinking that down there in the darkness lies the beautiful form that one year ago filled your homes with light and gladness; let

us try to wait and be patient, though the days are so weary and the nights are so terrible. Let us try to do our duty to the little ones left, and make their lives sunny, so that the void left by the big brother, or the little sister, or the pet baby of the household, may not be felt in their little hearts as it is in ours. And one day God grant that when the little ones shall need us here no longer, the veil shall be cast aside, the eyes watching "beside the golden gate" for us shall once more meet ours, "and there shall be no more parting."

Waiting.

"Learn to wait. The Gods will not be hurried."

ARE we not all waiting?

Childhood waiting for the freedom of youth. Youth longing for the opportunities of manhood, to grapple and wrestle with and conquer the world. Manhood looking to the time when fortune shall be attained and leisure from business shall afford a season for travel, and thought, and self-culture, and the thousand things that look so alluring in the distance.

Waiting, all waiting. The youth and the maiden for love; the poet and the artist for fame; the politician for power; the poor man for wealth; the rich man, perhaps ill in body and mind, praying for health; the

middle aged waiting for rest, that heart rest which comes to so few in this life; the old waiting for the reaper whose name is death.

Waiting, all waiting for some blessing in store in the future, and, as the years pass, growing less and less hopeful of hope's fruition, until at last here is merged in hereafter. The short days of joy and the long days of sorrow, the days of hope and of fear, of doubts and despair, are as a tale that is told, and we are no longer waiting.

Midsummer Musings.

"AT the midsummer when the hay was down." How many charming kaleidoscopic scenes this line produces. Yet fairest of all the pictures set in memory's golden frame is one of a summer afternoon a dozen years ago. On the sloping lawn sits a mother with a baby, her first born, on her lap, a great Newfoundland dog at her side. The mower's work is done, they are loading up the hay, and baby's father, strong and stalwart, is mounted on the fragrant pile. Sunshine and shadow are playing bo-peep together through the branches of the grand old elms and maples, and the earth is very fair and beautiful — the Garden of Eden could scarce have been fairer than this peaceful,

rural home. It is midsummer again, and baby, grown to a tall boy, and father, both are sleeping quietly, and the grass and the myrtle whisper a gentle lullaby over them. The mowers are at work; the sound of the scythe and of merry voices is borne in on the breeze; children, baby's brothers, are tossing and tumbling the hay; the sun shines as brightly, the birds carol as gayly, the world is as fair as a dozen years ago, but there's an emptiness in it, and a sense of insecurity and desolateness, that birds, nor flowers, nor sunshine can fill nor take away.

> "At the midsummer, when the hay was done,
> Said I, mournful, 'Though my life is in its prime,
> Bare lie my meadows, all shorn before their time;
> Through my scorched woodlands, the leaves are turning brown,
> It is the hot midsummer, when the hay is down.'"

Ah! how our idols are shattered as the years pass. The very evils that we prayed heaven might be averted have overwhelmed us; the very trials that our hearts shrank from, as the quivering flesh shrinks from the surgeon's knife, have searched us out. The world is chaos, and we are groping blindly with out-stretched hands to find some path through the darkness. By-and-by, after weary months of striving, of questioning, comes a "still small voice," whispering, "Peace, be still."

Gradually we gather up the broken threads of life. Little children, strong in their helplessness, draw us

back to neglected duties, and after a time comes resignation to the inevitable, and, if we are made of the right material, a development of character seldom attained in the sunshine of prosperity. We find that the soul of life's sweetness is "drawn out by tears."

"Can the Old love?"

THIS is the title of a volume I have noticed in the book stores. I do not know the author's name, nor how he answers the query, but I hope affirmatively. It seems to me there must come to all — I mean to all true souls — a time in life when love is an imperative necessity. When the heyday of youth is past, I think there comes a riper love, born of something higher than the mere passional attraction which the girl of sixteen and the boy of eighteen dignify by the holy name of Love.

This beautiful world of ours, overflowing with sources of enjoyment, is full of wretchedness, and nine-tenths of it is caused by the unhappy relations existing between the sexes. Murder and suicide have become an every-day occurrence; infanticide is of so little importance as to scarce provoke a comment; and well may those who can find time to step outside the whirlpool for a moment cry: How long, oh, Lord!

how long can these things exist? How long can we go on at this fearful pace?

Until men and women shall be true to themselves and to each other — until they marry for love, not passion, not wealth, not position, not for a handsome maintenance, but because their love for each other is so great that they cannot live apart — then I think we shall hear no more of free love, of faithless husbands, of wives seeking their affinities, of lovers shooting their mistresses, children their parents, of the soul too weary to wait "till the passion and madness of living are through," filling a suicide's grave, of madhouses with their number of inmates fearfully increasing each year.

We are living in a fast age, in a transition age, I think, where all true workers may find a field; and out of this chaos, perhaps, in future years may develop a beautiful order, which our children or our children's children may enjoy. But to return to the question, "Can the Old love?" I say yes. What is life worth if we must lay down our love with our youth? Love must continue through time, through eternity.

"When we see the first glory of youth pass us by,
Like a leaf on the stream that will never return;
When our cup, which had sparkled with pleasures so high,
First tastes of the other, the dark flowing urn—
Then, then is the time when affection holds sway
With a depth and a tenderness joy never knew;
Love, nursed among pleasures, is faithless as they,
But the love born of sorrow, like sorrow, is true."

Love and Sorrow.

What most I prize in woman
Is her affections, not her intellect.
The intellect is finite ; but the affections
Are infinite, and cannot be exhausted. — *Longfellow.*

"The language of all beauty, and of infinity itself, is love."

HOW much of joy and of sorrow comes to us through the affections. More, far more of misery than of happiness to the clinging, confiding nature ever making for itself idols, which after a brief period of blind devotion it finds, alas! too often, are made of a very inferior quality of clay, too sensuous and too selfish to understand or appreciate the wealth of love that is lavished on them ; often wounding almost maddening the passionate heart by a stupid misunderstanding, a cold indifference and a cruel neglect, far more terrible to bear than the occasional storm of a hasty temper, which is quickly regretted and atoned for.

Charlotte Bronté writes: "As to intense passion, I am convinced that that is no desirable feeling. In the first place, it seldom or never meets with a requital ; and, in the second place, if it did, the feeling would be only temporary ; it would last the honeymoon, and then, perhaps, give place to disgust, or indifference worse, perhaps, than disgust. Certainly this would be

the case on the man's part, and on the woman's—God help her, if she is left to love passionately and alone." The love which, after long years of bitter loneliness, crowned the life of this gentle woman, born to sorrow, came late and was brief as it was happy, and her words must have been written from observation, rather than from experience.

Madame de Stael, that great delineator of the tender passion, says: "How pitiable is the feeling, delicate woman, who commits a great imprudence for a man whose love she knows inferior to her own!"

Many a fine lady with little more heart than the marble statue standing in her drawing-room, would curl her haughty lip in scorn, at the bare idea of loving any thing better than her own fair self. Yet we find even in this remarkable age which has developed that anomaly known as the "girl of the period" (whose fastness and boldness in seeking the attention of the other sex is disgustingly apparent), hidden away in quiet nooks, coming little in contact with the world, gentle, confiding natures, all womanly tenderness, whose purest sympathies often lead them to sacrifices which are the source of life-long misery.

Some writer, who has made woman his theme, has said: "A chaste woman yields to the wishes of the man she adores, an unchaste one yields to her own." The generality of men, probably, have no conception

of the real delicacy of a true womanly nature; her longing for love, her yearning for sympathy; her weaker nature seeking strength and rest in one stronger; her despair on finding her sweetest and purest emotions coarsely misinterpreted and made a ribald jest by lips unfit to speak the name of woman. There are many Corinnes in real life, but alas! the Oswalds are very rare. Fate occasionally smiles propitiously on the love of such a woman and life is blissful; but more likely her "grand oak," to which every tendril of her life is entwined, proves rotten and worthless at the core, leaving the bright, sweet thing, that clung so closely, trailing in the dust, a mass of withered leaves and scentless, faded flowers, and henceforth she drags out a miserable existence of soulless, dreary days, and restless, moaning nights, or she becomes one of those unfortunates —

> "Weary of breath,
> Rashly importunate gone to her death."

Many men possess a power called animal magnetism which irresistibly attracts negative or weaker natures. It is the unscrupulous use of this mysterious power which has caused many a pure and modest woman to suddenly electrify a horror-stricken community by stepping aside from the path called virtue (a path trodden smooth, mainly by those half-hearted beings who are "good only by negation"), and henceforth she becomes

a pariah in society, while the object of her adoration, to whom she is as irresistibly attracted as the needle to the pole, and to whom she has given her life, is received with open arms by the same consistent community that condemns his victim.

> "What I ask is justice, justice, sir!
> Let both be punished, or both go free.
> If it be in woman a shameful thing,
> What is it in man? now, come, be just;
> Remember, she falls through her love for him,
> He, through his selfish lust!"

Not long since the following paragraph appeared in one of our dailies: "A private member of the demi-monde died yesterday. This scarlet woman, with all her sins, had qualities of heart and mind which many of her whiter sisters do not possess. She was a warm-hearted, generous creature. It is generally said, while we know it to be a fact, that she was a liberal and anonymous contributor to the fund which kept the 'Little Grocery' going a year and a half ago. Many a poor family will miss the kind and delicate philanthropy of one who, according to the world's dictum, was, before her physical death, 'cast away and lost.'"

Who among us know of the causes which led this warm-hearted, generous woman to become one of the demi-monde? Who knows of her temptation, her secret sorrow, her suffering? Do you for a moment suppose that such a woman prefers a life of infamy to that

of an honored wife and happy mother? Never! Betrayed perhaps by the man she loved; disowned by the world; what remained for her but to "live and die on the town?" And here let me ask a question which many think but few dare ask: Who is the better woman — she who *gives* herself, heart and life, to the man she loves, or the woman who *sells* herself, soul and body, to the man she despises? Priestly blessing sanctions the latter, and society blandly smiles and courts her favor, while her generous, impulsive, loving sister is "cast away and lost," unfit for recognition by her "whiter sisters." Gentle women were wont to weep over the wrongs and sorrows of the frail and lovely Frou-Frou, as depicted on the stage by the charming Agnes Ethel, yet should they chance to meet poor Frou-Frou on the street, would draw aside their skirts lest even the hem of their garments should be contaminated by her touch. Oh, consistency, thou art a jewel.

What Fame means to a Woman.

IT means dead sea apples to parched and fevered lips — it means weary days of sorrow and nights of wrestling with a great agony that no human eye ever looks upon — it means "wounded feet that shrink

and bleed, but press and climb the narrow way"— it means empty arms reaching out vainly for the loved and lost — it means a dumb, tortured soul that breaks its bonds at last and gives utterance to something that moves other souls. Fame to a woman! Did a happy woman ever desire Fame? Woman asks for love; it is her birthright, and when it is denied she takes fame as a substitute; though it reminds one of the remark of the old Scotch-woman as she looked on Burns' monument — "Puir Rob, he askit for bread and they gæ him a stone!" The true woman's life is in her affections, and she seldom soars far above the home nest if it be a happy one. Unless the gods preside at her birth she does not often become famous, except through some soul torture to which the rack and the thumb-screw would be light in comparison. It is shutting the bird in the dark to teach it to sing, the song comes at last, clear and sweet, and penetrating, a very abandon of song, that seems to mock at its own misery, but it comes through the gloom and anguish of imprisonment. Famous women — God pity them!

Jottings on a Hot Afternoon.

HOW hot it is? Oh, for a mountain breeze, or a whiff of sea air, or a cooling shower, or any thing in fact to bring the thermometer to its senses once more. I wonder if any of my readers have friends who live on a farm where they go every summer to rusticate. Happy readers if they have.

All through this hot season I have been haunted by a vision of an old-fashioned farm-house — not a villa, a little out of town, but a real old farm-house away off in the country, with a big garret where one can hide away on a rainy day with a good book and read, and dream dreams that will never be realized, and listen to the rain pattering on the roof; and a nice cool cellar, the shelves filled with pans of milk with cream on it; such cream — not the kind the milkman brings — and a great roomy kitchen that never gets hot, no matter how warm the day, because they keep the stove shut up somewhere in a shed, and have a great oven somewhere else where the baking is done, and right near the door is a well — a real well with a high curb and an "old oaken bucket" (not a pump); then up near the orchard there is an ice-house. Ah! how well I remember such a place! where a dear old auntie

used to welcome me with tears of joy, when I came, and shed tears of real sorrow when my visit ended, and crammed my trunk with things which she knew I could never get in the city, and last of all gather me a bouquet of marigolds, poppies, and other brilliant-hued and fragrant flowers, which I was naughty enough to drop from the window as soon as the cars had whirled me out of sight of the eyes watching for my last wave.

Dear old auntie, whose eyes will never watch my coming and going again, unless with other loved ones gone before, they are looking for my entrance to that country where I hope to find a more perfect rest and peace than even my visits to the old farm-house could impart.

Compensation.

UNLESS there be a law of compensation somewhere in this world or the next, it would seem that life to many is but a sad failure; and the question so often asked by good men and women, whose lives are passed in one long, weary struggle for the bare means of existence — "Why does vice flourish and sit in high places, while virtue, honesty and true worth drag miserably through the world unnoticed and unap-

preciated?" is still unanswered. Why is the fashionable lady, too delicate to rise to breakfast in the morning, too tenderly nurtured to bear a rude breath of air, whose dainty feet seldom touch the earth, except in stepping across the pavement to her luxurious carriage, better than the seamstress who toils until midnight, with bloodshot eyes and tired hands, over the elegant robe which is to adorn the lady of fashion? her equal, perhaps her superior in grace and refinement, with delicate tastes and longings for the beautiful all crucified — noble aspirations bound to earth by weary drudgery. Why does the honest, industrious merchant or mechanic see all his efforts to win a position for himself and family prove unavailing, while the unprincipled but successful gambler or speculator in one day realizes a fortune that insures him a life of ease and luxury, and the respect of society?

Why is the libertine, who rides in his carriage, clothed in purple and fine linen, received with open arms by the society who brand his heart-broken victim with the "scarlet letter," that no tears of anguish can ever efface? Why are little children born to a heritage of poverty and suffering, while within a stone's throw the heir of the rich man grows sick with a surfeit of the food for which the others are dying?

The problem remains unsolved; but I sometimes think that on the other side that thin but impenetrable vail,

which separates the earth from the spirit-life, many of those who sit in high places here shall find themselves far, far below the ones they once treated with cold indifference or cruel neglect. "For he that exalteth himself shall be humbled, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

A Day at Luzerne.

HAVING had for some weeks an unconquerable longing to seek a "lodge in some vast wilderness," and having read certain glowing accounts of life among the Adirondacks, we packed our trunks and started one fine day for that region. Changing cars at Troy, after being crowded, squeezed, jammed and nearly annihilated, we found ourselves seated in the train for Saratoga; and (*en passant*), should this letter by any chance meet the eye of the gallant gentleman (?) at Troy who made a path for himself through the crowd by thrusting aside with his cane ladies and children, will he please call to mind these lines:

> "Oh! wad some power the giftie gie us
> To see oursel's as ithers see us," etc.

With a contemptuous pity for the crowd of fashionables who left us at the Springs, and hearts swelling

with a sense of the sublimity which was soon to burst upon our vision, we took seats in the Adirondack train en route for North Creek. Passing now a quiet village, with a half envious longing for the peaceful, restful life of its inhabitants, and now a country churchyard, with its simple marble slabs gleaming through drooping branches, telling the old tale of parting and sorrow; grand old hills are around us, and the river gradually grows less, until the noble Hudson, which floats boats like palaces down to the ocean, becomes a shallow stream across which a child can wade. Our passengers gradually dwindle away, the greater portion stopping at Hadley for Luzerne, and at Thurman for Lake George, until there are but a half dozen of us left. And now

> "The day is closing cool,
> The woods are dim before us,
> The white fog of the way-side pool
> Is creeping slowly o'er us."

As we reach North Creek, the terminus of the road, and an unattractive village, whose principal feature is a saw-mill, situated just in front of our hotel, the scenery appears to be left behind us, or is still farther on. We are told of places to visit some fifteen or twenty miles farther into the woods, by stage, and the next morning a New York artist with two ladies take their departure in a drizzling rain, in an open wagon, for a place fifteen miles distant, where a log hut has ere this

opened its hospitable doors to receive them. Certain small boys of our party had come to fish, and in spite of rain and chilly weather must sally forth. Summoned by the tea bell, it was found that rolling logs into the water had been voted more exciting sport than fishing, and when they were found to be soaked to the waist the excitement waxed stronger. We had left home for an indefinite period, for days, or weeks, "It may be for years, it may be forever;" it proved to be days. The next morning found us seated in the cars with tickets and baggage checked for Saratoga. (We are on the "marrow bones of our soul" to the fashionables we left there.)

Approaching Hadley, we suddenly decided to stop until the afternoon train, at Luzerne, and a happy inspiration it proved to be. Taking the "Wayside" omnibus we rode through the prettiest, most romantic little village that it has ever been our good fortune to visit, and were set down at the hospitable doors of the Wayside Hotel. After duly registering our names and being shown into a pleasant room, we soon wended our way down to the lake, where a number of pretty little boats were moored, and several skimming over the placid water, most of them rowed by ladies. Not finding any one at liberty to row us, we took a charming walk through a path in the wood surrounding the lake, where meeting a brown faced country lad with a

basket of pond lilies we found he did not need much urging to enter our service, and running home with his basket soon met us at the landing, where, seating ourselves in a boat, we were rowed over the clear waters of the sweetest little lake that ever mirrored the green hills and blue skies, our young oarsman showing us all the points of interest. Here they gathered chestnuts in the autumn, and we could imagine what the glory of autumn must be in such a locality; there the pond lilies grew; here the white and there the yellow, and then such skating in winter! and the boy's eyes grew bright at the thought. Then we must take a run up to the summer house on the hill before dinner, and when we got there we wanted to stay all day, and see the sun go down and the moon rise.

Encircled by glorious hills in a little hollow, the lake rests peacefully. A few feet from it is the hotel, a large ample building in the Swiss style, surrounded by some acres of ground tastefully laid out, with here and there at convenient distance a pretty cottage in the same style for the accommodation of guests. We return to the hotel, and after an excellent dinner, walk out on the broad piazza to enjoy a last view of this enchanting spot. We are pleasantly entertained a half hour by the kind and attentive proprietor, and a lady guest, when we say good-bye, thinking that

"None shall more regretful leave
These waters and these hills than I;
Or distant, fonder dream how eve
Or dawn is painting wave and sky."

And we would say to all pleasure seekers, or to the weary seeking rest, go to Luzerne, for it is the synonym of repose.

"Lake of the Northland! keep thy dower
Of beauty still, and while above
Thy solemn mountains speak of power,
Be thou the mirror of God's love."

Amusement for the Boys.

I OFTEN think that city boys, even those whose parents are in comfortable, or even affluent circumstances, have a hard time of it. There seem to be so few sources of safe and lawful amusement for boys in cities. We have beautiful parks to be sure for them to walk in, but a live boy does not want to walk, certainly not long at a time, he wants to run, and leap, and jump, and turn summersaults; the park will do for the girls, but the boys can't do any thing there, and indeed, they can't do much anywhere within the city limits. If they stop on the corner to swop jack-knives or spin a top, the majestic form of a policeman looms up and orders them to "move on." If they find a vacant lot and commence a game of ball, an ubiqui-

tous gentleman with brass buttons appears, and again orders them to "move on," until we are fain to recall the words of Mr. Snagsby: "Well! really, constable, you know, really that does seem a question — where, you know?"

"If we went ten miles out of the city to play ball, I b'lieve we'd find a 'cop' there," was the indignant exclamation of one of a tired and heated trio of boys returning from a long and evidently fruitless tramp one hot day in midsummer.

Now, I would have ball grounds in every city; I would have bowling alleys where boys could play at a trifling expense; I would have skating rinks, and above all, I would have swimming schools. Oh, terror of mothers, that learning to swim! How often we are shocked by that terrible word, "Drowned!" Think of the awful terror and struggle of a young soul as the pitiless waves sweep it forever away from home and friends, and all the bright visions of youth, and yet the boys will learn to swim, even at the risk of life, and mothers will sit at home in half breathless suspense, wondering if their restless little lads have been tempted to the river.

Boys must and will have recreation out of school hours, it is right they should, and it rests with us whether it shall be safe and innocent and lawful pleasure, or whether they seek it in dangerous, underhanded and unlawful ways.

Our Homes.

HOW much has been written of Home, yet the subject is never worn threadbare. Home and love! Old as the creation, yet like the landscape before us, ever new, ever beautiful; the mere word fills one with tender, loving thoughts —

> "Home's not merely four square walls,
> Though with pictures hung and gilded."

It is, or should be, a place filled with peace and rest, and love, a refuge from the cares and coldness and deceit of the world, a haven of rest, an oasis in the desert, where soul and body are strengthened and refreshed when weary and worn with the struggle of life — a place where no rigid rules are enforced, and each inmate feels on entering that an atmosphere of blessed freedom prevails; where no strict boundary line exists between grown people and children, but where young and old mingle together in sweet and familiar intercourse; where the blessed Day of Rest is looked forward to as a season of physical and mental relaxation, and not dreaded as an interval of dull and stupid inertness, or made intolerable by an undue strictness and regard to the letter rather than the spirit of religion.

We make our homes; and how many of us make them what they should be? How many of us do our whole duty as husbands, wives, parents? How many of us use aright the unlimited authority we have over our own children! — overlooking at one time a fault which at another we condemn with a hasty and harsh reproof, and which we may perhaps recall with unavailing regret through long, bitter years, when the grass shall be waving between the dear face of our darling and our own.

The houses we live in are not always homes, no matter how crowded with elegant furniture, works of art and luxury; the simplest cottage, with its vine-draped window, its little parlor covered with a straw matting, its round table and chintz covered lounge, its shelf of books and stand of flowers, may contain more of the elements of a true home than the abode of luxury —

> "A world of care without;
> A world of strife shut out;
> A world of love shut in."

This is home.

Our Dead Darling.

"Look upon us, angels of young children, with regards not quite estranged, when the swift river bears us to the ocean."

NEARLY two years have passed since my darling left me, and this morning I have been dusting and arranging his books that lie on the bracket, in the corner of my room. They have lain there so many years; some of them since he was a baby.

How strange it seems that he should be gone, and these perishable things, that once gave him pleasure, should lie here still, the marks of his pencil on many of them, his name here and there in the first scrawl of a school-boy.

The same carpets are on the floors trodden by his feet, the same furniture in the rooms, the lounge where he has so often thrown himself when weary with play — his desk on the table filled with all manner of treasures, precious in the eyes of a little boy, and, oh! so precious to me now. Even the old dog, his faithful companion and playfellow, lies in his accustomed place, asleep with his head on his paws.

Nothing changed outwardly, yet that greatest of changes has quietly passed over all. Death, with icy fingers, has touched the bright eyes, stolen the bloom

from the round cheeks, the smile from the sweet lips. The busy hands so eager in launching the tiny boat, in throwing the ball, or in some little work about garden and house, the quick feet bounding up the stairs, the bright face flashing in like a ray of sunlight, with some request, perhaps not always granted as readily as might have been — all are quiet.

Ah! if we could only know how soon we may have cause to regret some hastily spoken word — how soon our children are to become angels, and leave us with a pain in our hearts, deepened by the remembrance of some word or act which we would give worlds to recall! All is but a memory now; and I often wonder whether all the joys of a "golden eternity" can efface from our minds the agony of that bright, cool morning in the early autumn, when our darling whispering "Mamma," with his last breath, went from our home forever.

Yes, our "big boy," our first born, more precious to us than all the treasures of earth, is gone. Life can never be quite the same to us; and were the question asked: "What's the best thing in the world?" we should answer: "Something out of it, I think."

I called at the house of a friend the other day, and found it more than usually bright and cheerful, with the return of her eldest son to spend vacation, and a terrible, unconquerable longing possessed me for mine

to come home. But he has gone to a school where there are no vacations, no glad coming home to get ready for the next term; and I can only await, like many another tired soul, the time when I too shall be borne over the "swift river;" and I think that —

> "One of the joys of our heaven shall be
> The little boy that died."

Farewell.

> "A word that hath been and must be,
> A sound that makes us linger — yet farewell!"

THE fiat has gone forth! Fate has decreed that our lines are to be cast in strange places, and the places that once knew us shall know us no more.

For months we have been striving to familiarize ourselves with the thought of change. While shut in by winter's "tumultuous privacy," we felt secure, and the cloud on our horizon was a mere speck in the distance — but lo! the spring days are upon us, and we can no longer close our eyes dreamily in the early dawn and sigh, as oppressive thoughts intrude upon our matutinal nap.

> "Let the morrow take care of the morrow,
> Leave things of the future to fate —"

Alas and alas! the old home is beginning to have a strange look, like the change on the face of a dear friend who is passing forever away from our clinging embrace. We wander aimlessly from room to room recalling visions of the past. In this one is gathered again a circle of friends and kinsfolk around the hospitable board; no chair is vacant, lost faces have come back, voices that have long been silent speak again, forms that we have missed "enter at the open door," and smilingly join the festival." We open another door. It is Christmas eve, cold and stormy without, brilliant within, with fire and light and radiant faces, and the stately hemlock, fresh and fragrant from the neighboring wood, bravely bears its unaccustomed burden, and showers its precious fruit upon the happy group beneath, while "mirth and music sound the dirge of care."

In this chamber immortal souls have been ushered into life. From this, beloved and beautiful forms have been carried forth, leaving us to grope in a world of shadows. One by one our household gods are removed, and at last the bare walls return our yearning gaze with a vacant stare. The ashes of home drop from our lingering feet. "Its echoes of love and their answers of peace" shall awaken no more. Its doors close upon us for the last time. Its gates shut us out from the old life forever.

The Little Outcast.

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father."

CHRISTMAS Eve had come again, and happy little faces were at the windows, and bright eyes were peering anxiously out into the twilight, waiting for the deeper shades of evening; for beautiful Christmas trees, glittering with bon-bons and laden with rare and wonderful gifts, were shut up in back parlors and libraries, and mysterious packages had been arriving all day and had been carefully deposited in the closed rooms, while the children were kept in the nursery, with the promise of a visit from good old Santa Claus in the evening.

The streets were thronged with lively, busy people. Papas were hastening home with arms and pockets overflowing with bundles; errand boys were running to and fro; sleighs were dashing along with sounds of bells and merry voices vibrating on the frosty air. Mirth and music, laughter and song, proclaimed that Christmas, dear Christmas, bountiful, generous, kind old Christmas, was about to pay the world his annual visit.

But were there only happy hearts in the great city

on this blessed Christmas eve! Ah, no; the bright moon and the brilliant stars looked down on many wretched homes, where little children had not even bread to satisfy their hunger, nor fire to keep them warm; and it was not to be a Merry Christmas to them, but just like the other days, with their pinching poverty, in their poor homes.

Slowly wending his way through the gas-lit streets was a little boy not more than eight years old. Only a few tattered garments covered his little, shivering limbs; his face was pale and thin, and his great blue eyes had a weary, pleading look. But people were too happy or too busy to give a thought to the little ragged boy, who sometimes asked a penny of the passer-by or stopped at a basement door to beg for food. But cook too intent upon her ices and jellies to listen to beggars, rudely thrusts him out, and so the little fellow wandered on, standing sometimes for a moment to gaze in a window where the curtain had been left aside, to look at the beautifully-dressed children, and the scene in the richly-furnished room seemed to the little outcast like a glimpse into fairy land. And wondering why he was shut from all this happiness, with a sigh that was half a sob, he wandered on again, for nobody missed him.

He was an orphan, and was sent out every morning to beg for the food which kept him from starving. On

and on he went slowly and more slowly, feeling faint and hungry, and tired. Presently he came to a quiet street where the stores were all closed, and creeping in behind a great box, he laid down on the cold walk; but it seemed so nice to rest he did not mind the cold any more, and soon he fell asleep and dreamed — such a happy dream. He was lying on his own little white-draped bed in the cottage that had once been his home. The fragrance of the June roses which clambered over the windows was wafted in by the soft summer breeze. He heard music — such heavenly music, and his dear mother, who had died, glided softly in and took her tired little boy in her arms and kissed him and rocked him to sleep, just as he had remembered she had done when he was a very little child.

The night grew bitter cold, sleigh riders and foot travelers were safely and snugly at home; the lights on the Christmas trees had burned down, parlors were darkened, happy hearts were wrapped in happy dreams, and wretched ones for a few brief hours forgot their wretchedness. Only the moon and stars peeped in behind the box where lay the little, cold, white face with its radiant smile.

Christmas morning dawned cold and clear. The bells were ringing merrily, merrily, "Merry Christmas," "Merry Christmas." The children shouted it, the bells caught up the sound which echoed and re-

echoed on the frosty air. Happy-looking parents, and rosy, bright-faced children are on their way to church to spend an hour, and then home again to feasting and merriment.

But what is this coming? something borne on a litter, with a troop of boys on either side. What can it be? Oh, only a little beggar, found frozen on the street this morning. The mirthful voices are hushed for a moment, and the kind little hearts are sorry they could not have done something for the little beggar boy, but it is too late, and he is soon forgotten in the sumptuous dinner and the merry games that fill the short afternoon brim-full of fun and happiness.

Little despised, neglected outcast of yesterday? Angel to-day? Who can tell how far the joys of your Christmas exceed those of the most petted child of luxury, for "I say unto you, that in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father."

About Babies.

"THE *New York Weekly* believes in babies."

I'm very glad to hear it, Mr. Editor. I wouldn't give much for the man that doesn't, and still less for the woman. But so few people do believe in babies nowadays. What is there sweeter in the world than a

plump, good-natured baby, with its great, round eyes looking wonderingly around its little world, trying to fathom the mystery of all the strange things it sees? The box of geraniums nodding at him away over in the window — a long mile it must appear to the little bobbing head; the chandelier, like a great sun up in the ceiling; the pretty, bright fire in the grate, where mamma warms the little toes sometimes; the book-case, the lounge, the curtains, the table — all are objects of speculation to the little brain. And finally, with a long, tired breath, home comes the little traveler from his tour of investigation to mother's eyes, when the satisfied "coo" tells of the world of love he recognizes there.

"A babe in a house is a well-spring of pleasure."

How the little brothers and sisters, when the advent of a new baby is announced, come filing in, half shy, half pleased, to take a peep at the new-comer; how they admire the little red face, the tiny soft hands, the wee, round mouth, and above all, the wonderful little feet, which nurse unwraps from the soft flannels to show them. If they could only stay with mamma and that little baby; but they are marched quietly out again by the solemn-looking nurse (why must nurses look solemn?) to wonder and wait for another peep.

I don't believe in the man or the woman who don't believe in babies, and I am often astonished and indig-

nant at the treatment I see the little ones receive from their own parents. How they are snubbed, cuffed, scolded, sent to bed, locked up, when, if justice were done, in many cases, the elders instead of the children would receive the punishment. I verily believe there's many an old bachelor and spinster, in spite of the slurs thrown at them, who would treat the children more kindly than half the parents, for all bachelors are not "crusty," nor is the milk of human love turned sour in the breasts of all old maids.

Apropos of bachelors, just now I remember a young mother in a state of blissful beatitude with her first baby, and a bachelor brother (who is a husband and father now) trying to calm her ecstasies with the prediction that it would never have any hair. Then, when the soft down began to appear and lengthen into little sunny rings, a wise and solemn prophecy was announced that he would never walk. And when the little feet began to patter about the house as soft as summer rain drops, the fiat went forth that he would never talk. But the time came when the lisping voice made music sweeter to the mother's ears than the summer rain, or the song of birds, or the whispering of the wind through the pine grove by the nursery window, or any thing this side of Heaven.

But I am forgetting what I meant to tell you. Well, one day, when that mother stood peeping through a

crack in the door of the room where the august uncle and little nephew had been left together a moment, the uncle was tossing and kissing the little fellow as naturally as his own father could have done it; and when mamma announced her approach by a half-suppressed giggle, the baby was dropped, the newspaper resumed, and every thing found in an austere and proper manner.

Bachelors are afraid of being laughed at, but, really away down in the bottom of their hearts, I believe half of them like babies just as well as you or I do, and would be fathers this blessed day if there weren't so many silly women in the world, who don't know enough to make good wives and mothers.

But we'll drop the bachelors and come back to the babies. And I repeat there's nothing half so sweet and cunning, and pretty, and lovable, and altogether satisfactory in the world, as a healthy, good-natured baby; and if anybody thinks differently — well, they have a right to their opinion, I suppose.

Tact.

TACT may be defined to be that true courtesy and politeness which springs involuntarily from a refined and gentle nature. A sort of sixth sense, as quick to detect the feelings of others as the touch of the blind to discover that which the eyes cannot see. Dickens gives us a beautiful illustration of this delicate faculty in Bleak House, where dear little "Dame Durden" in one of her village rambles, says: "I happened to stroll into the little church when a marriage was just concluded, and the young couple had to sign the register. The bridegroom, to whom the pen was handed first, made a rude cross for his mark; the bride, who came next, did the same. Now, I had known the bride when I was last there, not only as the prettiest girl in the place, but as having quite distinguished herself in the school; and I could not help looking at her with some surprise. She came aside and whispered to me, while tears of honest love and admiration stood in her bright eyes, 'He's a dear, good fellow, Miss; but he can't write, yet — he's going to learn of me — and I would n't shame him for the world!'" Could one of our young ladies who are taught etiquette at Madame Beausham's finishing academy furnish an example of

truer and more womanly delicacy and nobility of soul? Tact shows itself in a thousand ways, fills up the awkward pauses at a formal dinner party, seeks out the neglected and unnoticed at the evening assembly, showing them little attentions which cause the vain, ill-bred beauty and belle to stare and simper. Tact encourages the young, listens with deference and respect to the old, although they may sometimes be a little garrulous; passes quietly any little breach of established rules by those unaccustomed to mingle in society. Tact never wounds us, never sends the blood in an indignant tingle to our finger tips by some ill-timed, brusque remark or action, that leaves a sting long after it has passed from the shallow mind that perpetrated it. One may lack wealth, talent, beauty, but tact will make them friends among all sensible, refined people. It never forgets itself, it is never off its guard, it is innate.

Many young misses who are passing through a course of fashionable education may enter a room with more assurance, may bow and extend their slender fingers with a well-bred nonchalence, may sweep with flowing robes gracefully through the mazes of the latest dance, and recline with languid ease upon the sofa; may listen to a glorious opera or look upon a sublime landscape without one expression of genuine delight, but I would gladly exchange all their silly airs and graces

for the sincere, friendly hand-pressure of some dear, unfashionable old friend, for the unstudied dignity and grace of a true, warm-hearted woman, for the fresh, earnest enthusiasm of a young girl educated under the supervision of a sensible, loving mother. Let us instil into the minds of our daughters some of those virtues which their grandmothers possessed, and I do not doubt but their manners will be pleasing and agreeable, although they cannot all receive the advantages of Madame Beausham's finishing school for young ladies.

A True Story of a Haunted House.

A STATELY old brick mansion, surrounded by an acre or two of garden and lawn, in the suburbs of a large city, with the reputation of being haunted clinging to it since the earliest recollection of the oldest inhabitant, but wherefore none could tell. Every old gossip in the neighborhood had a different tale, yet none would declare positively to having seen the ghost; but each had a friend or relative, who had a friend or relative, who had at some remote period in the history of the old house, heard or seen some unaccountable noise or apparition. But the people most interested only smiled at the ghostly rumors, and lit-

tle children were born, and grew, and thrived, and frolicked merrily in the large, old-fashioned rooms, and romped and played in the garden in spite of ghost and goblin. But one day came the denouement — the ghost actually made its appearance, and it happened in this manner.

It was the Fourth of July, that day so delighted in by the little people, and papa having been absent from home several days, and not expected until the morrow, mamma had bought the usual supply of crackers and other combustible material for celebrating the day in the noisiest manner possible. Then having promised to take the children to the house of a friend in the city, to see the procession pass, and also giving the servant a few hours' leave of absence, the doors were locked, and taking a car, mamma and children were soon at the house of their friend. Now, it chanced that papa returned unexpectedly soon after, bringing with him Aunt M——, and finding the doors fastened and the family gone, he unceremoniously burst open the kitchen door and walked up to the sitting-room, where, leaving Aunt M——, he proceeded to the city in search of his family.

It being a warm day, Aunt M—— soon donned a white wrapper, and feeling tired after her journey, threw a handkerchief over her head and fell asleep. Soon after Biddy, the servant, returning, was surprised

and alarmed at finding doors and windows open, and started at once on a tour of investigation. Arriving at the sitting-room — behold! the white-robed figure seated quietly in an arm-chair.

"Howly Mother! The ghost! The ghost!" and away rushed Biddy to the nearest neighbor for help, where, telling her tale, two of the sterner sex volunteered to "lay the ghost."

Biddy accompanied them as far as the door, but could not by any persuasion be induced to enter the house. So these good neighbors with somewhat pallid faces, mounted the stairs, and greatly to Aunt M——'s astonishment, demanded her name and business in the house. After many explanations, they departed, only half satisfied as to the veracity of her story; but poor, frightened Biddy waited out doors until the return of the family, when the peels of laughter which greeted her account of the ghostly visitor finally dispelled her fears. Yet, during the whole of Aunt M——'s visit, she kept a safe distance, evidently still regarding her as some uncanny or supernatural being. And so our ghost, like all ghosts, proved to be only the creation of an excited imagination.

Cannot Afford It

HOW few of us have the moral courage to make the above assertion, often making miserable, flimsy excuses for what we do or for what we leave undone rather than come out boldly with the truth — "I cannot afford it." Running in debt for things which we can easily dispense with; worrying and fretting to keep up an appearance of wealth which we do not possess; driving husbands and fathers to desperation to keep up a style of living equal to that of some acquaintance who has ten times our means.

And why, let me ask, should we feel any shame in regard to the amount of our income, so that we are honest enough to live within it? Gail Hamilton writes: "Blessed be poverty, and failure, and calmness, and silence." Blessed, indeed, be poverty, and silence, and dignity, compared with the loud and vulgar ostentation of that class so appropriately known by the name of Veneering. And how quickly a person of sense will detect the difference between the sham and the real. In the house of Veneering we see a profusion of gilding, mirrors, upholstery, pictures selected for their fine frames, china and silver, crowded together with very little regard to their real uses or harmony so that

they are expensive, and are recommended by dealers as the latest and most recherché style.

We see pretentious manners in company; obsequiousness, fawning and flattery to those whose society it is desirable to court; lavish expenditure and liberality where it tells, and meanness and pinching where it does not; contempt and insult to those who walk in the garb of poverty; wrangling and bickering in the family circle; orders to servants given in a rude, authoritative tone, and the thousand things, both great and small, that show through the polished veneering a soul of the cheapest and roughest pine.

I sometimes recall with a smile the boast of a little boy to his playmates that his mother's teeth were all filled with gold, and I am frequently quite as much amused with the boasting, and bombast, and pretension of children of a larger growth, who are more pitiably ludicrous than the little ones. Could such people but realize the fact, that the true lady, the true gentleman, is in all places, to all people, under all circumstances, gentle, courteous, just and generous, they might feel inclined to strip off that outer semblance of gentility, which is only the cloak to vulgarity, and begin the work in earnest of polishing and beautifying the real wood, which, though it be only of pine, bright, and smooth, and clear, will at least have the merit of appearing in its true color. "Since the war," we often

hear, "things are so different," and doubtless they are. More shoddy in cloth and in society. It is a good thing to bear adversity with equanimity; it is a better thing to bear prosperity without elation. And it is only a person of real moral worth who can bear either philosophically.

Madame Pfeiffer approaching home after her journey around the world speaks of the necessity of changing her traveling dress as she was now in a civilized country where people were judged of by their clothes. It would seem somewhat of a satire upon civilization and yet in the main the assertion is a true one. We are judged by superficial brains very much by the clothes we wear. And it is a very pleasant thing to wear nice clothes made in the prevailing style, without going to the extreme of any fashion which may become ridiculous. But look at one of our ultra-fashionable ladies dressed for her round of calls. A three thousand dollar camel's hair shawl wraps her delicate frame from the chill air, a seventy-five dollar bonnet is perched on the extreme top of her thirty dollar chignon, a five hundred dollar dress sweeps the pavement as she languidly walks from her door to her carriage, five thousand dollars' worth of diamonds adorn her neck, ears and hands, a forty dollar mouchoir swings daintily from its jeweled ring; she toils not, yet Solomon in all his glory was a mere farthing candle in comparison

to this *lumière du gaz*. Is it any marvel that she awakes some fine morning to find her husband branded bankrupt and suicide? Better say "I cannot afford it," and if the butterflies of fashion soar away from you, why—let them soar, they will perhaps alight by and by in a very miry spot with wings torn and soiled and drooping, while you will sit and sing in some safe little nest rocked by the breeze, with the blue sky above you and the green earth beneath you, thanking God that you had the moral courage to live your own life in your own way despite the demands of that despot whose name is — Society.

Midnight.

THE earth is cold and dim beneath the wintry sky. In the quiet village streets the lights are extinguished, save here and there a flickering ray falls through the half-closed blinds of a sick-chamber, showing the figure of some anxious watcher gliding to and fro. Or perhaps in some dimly-lighted room the Death Angel has just entered, and gentle hands are busily robing the silent form for its last sleep, while through the house a wail of sorrow breaks the stillness of the night, and is borne upward through the darkness to the Ever Compassionate, who sends Death's twin-sister, Sleep, with balm for the sorrow-stricken hearts.

Here the feeble cry of a new-born babe sends a throb of joyful thanksgiving through the household; and here a happy bride, her fair head pillowed on her husband's breast, lies sleeping with a smile upon her lips, no care nor sorrow, no anxious forebodings of the trials that are lying in wait in the years that are to come, cast a shadow over the sunny face, and waking or sleeping, life seems but a happy dream. Here, in the solitude of her chamber, a widow weeps for the love that has gone out of her life, leaving it as cold and dark as the night, while the soft breathing of her fatherless ones is mingled with her sobs. And here the toil-worn man lies wrapped in dreamless sleep. Old age, middle age, youth and infancy, all are slumbering. Care and sorrow, hope, fear, despair, love, pain and passion, all forgotten for a few brief hours. Every burden is laid down. The prisoner dreams of freedom, the absent of home, the sorrowing of some vanished joy, and so the night wears on.

In the large cities vice and crime stalk abroad under cover of the darkness. Theatres, concert halls and opera houses are pouring forth a tide of human life; the gay belle and her devoted cavalier, husbands and wives, friends and acquaintances; a Bohemian party of artists, authors and musicians, going to see the old year out in some gay saloon, where wine and wit shall flash, and sparkle, and effervesce together; and ming-

ling with the crowd are pickpockets, gamblers, frail, erring women and vile, unprincipled men, each soul going on its way alone, absolutely alone, for though heart may respond to heart, and friends and lovers, husbands and wives, may be united by strong bonds of love and sympathy, yet, wakening suddenly, or sitting alone in the last solemn hour of the night, there is a sense of utter loneliness, dimly felt, even by the young bride, with head pillowed on her husband's breast.

The clock strikes twelve! The rumble and the roar gradually cease, and for a few short hours, darkness with brooding wings, wooes the great city to repose.

Foreign Missions.

"FOREIGN missions," indeed! I never hear the words but a vision of Mrs. Jellyby rises before me, sitting in her untidy dress and littered room, dictating to poor, tired, slovenly Cady, who writes with frowning brow and sullen lips, long letters relating to the benighted condition of the inhabitants of Borrioboola Gha, on the left bank of the Niger. And I listen, half expecting to hear poor, little neglected Peepy's head bumping down the stairs, while his absorbed mamma complacently continues her dictation, with a far-off look in her eyes, which tells that her thoughts are

with the poor heathen. And wretched Mr. Jellyby, who sits in the home, where waste, filth and disorder reign, with his head against the wall, opening his mouth from which no sound issues, meekly waiting for the half-drunken servant to bring in the ill-cooked, ill-served, miserable meal. "Foreign missions!" Home missions! say I. Let our missionary, after looking well to the ways of his own household and successfully accomplishing his mission there, stop over the sailing of a steamer in the great metropolis. Let him walk through its gas-lit streets between the hours of night-fall and midnight. Buy from that little, shrinking, trembling, shivering, half-clad boy the solitary paper he carries in his hand, and has with a pleading look in his dark eyes offered to a dozen passers-by. Then follow him home, if that name can be given to the room in the old tumble-down tenement house, reeking with filth and dampness. Shudder at the vile sights, and sounds and odors, that sicken you as you ascend flight after flight of rickety stairs.

In a bed of straw covered with a few rags is a woman whose wasted form, and hectic cheek, and racking cough, tell that want and misery have done their work. Nestled close beside her are two little pinched faces, from which the soft beauty of childhood has been starved and frozen out. Listen to her story, it is very short. Her husband, an honest mechanic, was

killed a year ago by a fall from a scaffolding; they had lived comfortably before his death, she has worked since, while she could, but now she is dying, and oh! the poor children, what is to become of them? And a great agony looks out of the mother's eyes, for her children are dear to her as yours in their tender, helpless infancy were dear to you. Turn not away from her, I beseech you, comfort her, as you hope for comfort in your dying hour, brighten the wretched room with fire, and light, and food, and brighten her heart with the promise that her children shall be cared for. There is no suffering like this in Borrio-boola-Gha, let its people go untaught yet a little longer. After making the poor woman comfortable for the night, with a promise to call on the morrow, follow your little guide down the shaky stairs again into the street. Sounds of drunken revelry, shouting, swearing, the cries of little children, and the shrill tones of women's voices shock your sensitive ears. Ah! this is far worse than sailing away to some summer land where a pleasant cottage has been prepared for your reception and docile pupils are awaiting your arrival.

The clock strikes ten! You bid your little guide good-night as you see the lights on Broadway gleaming before you. Here you are met by women, young, middle-aged, girls of fifteen, women of forty, painted, curled, bedizzened, bedraggled, they address you,

boldly, shamelessly. Well, suppose you stop a moment and speak kindly, seriously to one of them, she turns away with an oath; to another, her answer is a mocking laugh that fiends might echo; to a third, she bursts into a fit of weeping and sobs out a tale that the angels in Heaven would weep to hear. Ah! there's nothing like this in Borrio-boola-Gha.

Now go to your hotel, or, you are stopping at the pleasant home of your friend, the Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions. My compliments to the Board, and tell them I am one of the Bored who believe in the charity that begins at home.

Live---To Exist.

EMPHATICALLY to enjoy life; to be in a state of happiness." Such is Webster's definition. How many *live* according to such conditions? How many are in a state of happiness? Yet this is a dear old earth, in spite of all the fault that is found with her, that we spend our lives in, worrying, toiling, struggling for the means of existence. And though sometimes behind a cloud, the sun is still shining over our heads, the mountains call to us to come and gather strength, the brooks and birds sing to us, peaceful, sheltered valleys woo us to an ideal life of rest and love. But there is

no time to pause and listen to the still, small voices that are calling to us. No time to seek out and admire a glorious landscape that lifts our thoughts above all the petty cares of life, and Heaven itself seems opening to us. No time to spend a quiet day in the woods, imbibing through every sense the thousand delights that nature holds for those who love her. Unfortunate mortals! We have none of us means quite sufficient for our wants, and we must still toil on.

The fortune of the millionaire is but a mite compared to the fifteen millions of his friend, so he speculates in stocks, and the next week finds him a beggar, and then the toil begins again, or perchance his name is in the morning paper among the list of suicides. With some, life wears away in the weary labor for daily bread, while others spend sleepless nights in cogitating the best investment for their millions.

Thoreau built, with his own hands, a house, the actual cost of which was twenty-eight dollars; his expenses two-thirds of a year, including his building, were sixty-two dollars, and there he lived alone two years, occasionally entertaining his friends and paying visits, happy and at peace with himself and the world. We cannot all follow Thoreau's example and live in the woods, in a house containing a single room, raise our own corn and beans, and bake our corn cakes in the ashes; but restless, struggling, suffering, selfish beings that we

are, is there no way in which we can aid each other to live truer and happier lives? And in uprooting the weeds, and cutting away the brambles and briars that surround other lives, shall we not, while making an opening for the sun to shine upon their path, feel its vivifying rays upon our own heads. And at last, should the angel who appeared to Abou-Ben-Adhem, visit our couch, would it not be a happy thing to say "Write me as one who loves his fellow men"?

Mother-in-Law. (The other side.)

"So they have shirked and slighted me, and shifted me about,
So they have well nigh soured me, and wore my old heart out."

'TIS only mother-in-law, so let her drudge and toil, taking the place of a servant without a servant's pay or privileges. Don't ask her to walk or to ride with you; don't take her to concerts or lectures, she is too old to care for such things; old people like a quiet life, and do not need change; and then Bridget and Nora must have their evenings out, and just as likely as not it is the very time that you have tickets to the opera, so mother-in-law must sit with the children. Then there is darning and patching and knitting enough to keep her busy all day and every evening in the week. Then Tommy comes down with scarlet fever, and mother-in-

law must nurse him while mother keeps the other children away from contagion on the floor below. Baby cries with colic every night, and mother-in-law must take him in her room because she knows just how to soothe and quiet him. Or cook flies off in a tangent some morning before the breakfast things are cleared away, and mother-in-law must supply her place for a few days. So often passes the life of the mother-in-law; a few months or years with one, and then with another of her children; often an unwelcome member of the family, spending the remnant of her life in unappreciated toil for those whose duty it should be to render her declining years comfortable and full of peace. Often a mere drudge in the family, tenderly nursing the sick, watching over the little ones with a patience and anxiety exceeding that of the parents; knitting, darning, sewing; alternately cook, seamstress or nursemaid, as circumstances may require. Thinking longingly, regretfully, sometimes with gathering tears of her own early married life, which does not seem so very long ago, when she was mistress of a happy home, when little children of her own clambered on her knee, when a strong arm was hers to lean upon, and a kind voice spoke words of love and encouragement. There are, undoubtedly, disagreeable, interfering, meddlesome mothers-in-law, who make home any thing but a paradise, but there is also the noble-hearted, unselfish

mother-in-law, who should be treated with consideration, and be made to feel that she is neither a burden nor a cipher in the household. There should be no shirking, no slighting, no shifting about.

Human Fish.

IF I believed in the transmigration of souls, I should feel altogether positive that some of the persons I meet in the world are simply codfish, metamorphosed, or, re-incarnated in a human body.

No burst of enthusiasm is ever heard from the lips, no great emotion ever lights the eye or kindles the cheek of the human codfish; devote heart, life and soul to one of them and you will find him, or her, as responsive to your ardor as the iron statue standing in your garden, embowered in fragrant blossoms, is appreciative of the beauty with which it is surrounded.

Receive Dolphinia with open arms, give her your tenderest greeting, it will be met with two clammy finger tips and the slight touch of a pair of bloodless lips.

Out upon your apathetic, ichthy-rial natures, that are capable neither of appreciating the grand and glorious things in God's beautiful world, nor of understanding

and reciprocating the sweet and tender courtesies of friendship and love.

Give me the heart that sends the blood bounding through the veins, that can love and hate, suffer and enjoy, leap with fiery indignation at a mean, despicable act, glow with a noble passion and become exalted with a sublime idea.

Give me the April heart, like the April day with its storms and its sunshine, rather than the chill, sunless heart of November, that curdles the blood in the veins, and broods with its silent, leaden sky, like a pall over the spirit.

A Tale of the Tropics.

MORNING in the tropics! The sun had just risen, and the gorgeous and luxuriant foliage, still covered with a heavy dew, was glistening under its fervid rays as though a shower of diamonds had fallen in the night; the air was laden with the perfume of blossoms and vocal with the melody of bright-plumed birds. The streets of the ancient town of P—— were beginning to show signs of life and activity; the water carrier astride his mule was riding at a lazy pace, stopping occasionally to supply his customers with water fresh from the mountain streams. Gaily turbaned ne-

gresses, with their light muslin skirts trailing in the dust, and carrying on their heads piles of snowy garments from the laundry, baskets of luscious bananas, pines, oranges and other delicious fruits, showed their white teeth in a broad smile as they bade each other a friendly "buena dios."

The inmates of the casa of Don Henrico Alvarez appeared to be still wrapped in slumber. No sound was heard save the chatter of a parrot, hanging in his gilded cage on the vine-covered balcony, and the rustle of the palm tree stirred by the gentle breeze from the ocean. But there was reason for the unusual silence at this hour in the morning, late for even a tropical household to be slumbering. A grand ball had been given the night before, at which every old and wealthy family of the town had been represented, and ere the last guest had departed, and the last strain of music had floated away on the perfumed air, the southern cross had paled before the beams of the rising sun; an atmosphere of peaceful repose seemed to reign throughout the house. All slept save one. The queenly daughter of Alvarez, to celebrate whose birth-right this magnificent fête had been given, paced her room with restless feet, still wearing the robe of pearly silk with its trimmings of costly lace, and rare diamonds, the gift of her father to this petted daughter and only scion of his house, her luxuriant black hair wound in

many a shining coil around the beautiful head with its single ornament of a gorgeous scarlet passion flower, fit emblem of the heart so wildly throbbing beneath the silken waist. This regal beauty with the form and face of a peri and a heart of fire, in which love burned, with so intense a flame that it needed but a breath of jealousy to fan it into the consuming blaze of a deadly hate. This proud, petted, undisciplined creature was suffering from the pangs of a wounded and slighted love. A fair, slender girl, with eyes as azure as the skies of her native clime, and waving hair that shone as though sunbeams were gathered in its golden meshes, was winning from her a heart that was dearer to her than all the treasures of her father's wealth, and without which the lowest servant in his house would be an object of envy. This fair northerner, accompanied by a brother, had forsaken the pleasures of sleigh rides, parties and operas at home, to enjoy a few months of the indolent and voluptuous life of the tropics, ostensibly for the improvement of her health, but, possibly, as some of her rivals and one or two rejected lovers, who had been caught in the golden meshes of her hair, affirmed, to renew the acquaintance formed the previous summer at a watering place, with a rich and handsome young southerner. Whatever the object, the result seemed entirely satisfactory, and evening after evening saw Don Manuel at her side, although

she well knew that he had been a year betrothed to the beautiful girl who watched her when they met with gleaming eyes, acknowledging her smiling recognition with a frigid and scornful hauteur.

The calmest nature suffers intolerable pangs from slighted affection; what, then, must be the agony of a heart like this? The tortures of a lost soul could scarce be greater, and yet this girl, with the coldly glittering eyes, saw, with the insight of woman, and rejoiced at the misery she was inflicting, and every art of a beautiful and unscrupulous woman was used to weave a spell around the rich and fascinating southerner.

Night has again dropped her curtain over the broad Pacific; dark-eyed senoritas accompanied by gallant-looking senors and officers from the ships lying in the harbor are promenading on the ramparts; sounds of revelry are floating upon the air, for in the evening commences the life and enjoyment of the tropics.

In the home of one of the wealthy old Spanish families were congregated all the beauty and fashion of the town. Sitting a little apart from the gay crowd were Senor Manuel and the fair Inez, engrossed in an interesting conversation. But what guest is announced who draws every eye and hushes every voice? Juanita Alvarez enters upon the arm of her father, a vision of loveliness that seems to be more of heaven than of

earth, dressed in a robe of filmy lace, looped here and there with fragrant orange blossoms, magnificent pearls encircling neck and arms and wound in the glossy braids of her raven hair, her face as white as the blossoms on her dress, and her great dark eyes luminous with an unearthly light. As she enters the room with the air of a queen, each beautiful woman feels herself pale into an insignificant star in presence of the glorious moon. But let us go back a few hours and look at the bowed head, the face convulsed with the agony of mortified pride and wounded love. Shall this daughter of a noble house who has rejected lovers by the score for this one false and fickle heart, live to feel the pity of friends and the scorn of the rival whose heart is as cold as the snows of her native land? Never! to-night shall be a triumph — her last one! Her faithful maid wonders at the unusual care her mistress is giving to her toilet, and when all is complete pronounces her "as lovely as an angel." But one thing more; from a little cabinet she takes a small phial containing a white powder, and with one last agonized glance upon the beautiful reflection in the mirror, drops the contents into a glass of wine and drinks to the last drop. Then calmly she descends to meet the fond old father, who will never more take pride or pleasure in his beautiful daughter.

The band is playing Beethoven's Dream Waltz; the

hand of the beautiful Juanita has been eagerly sought in every dance, and now Senor Manuel has come to claim her as a partner. * * *

How beautiful she is to-night! What a strange, unearthly light glows from her dark eyes! The glittering blue ones that follow her with their cold and cruel glare look pale and faded in contrast. The fickle lover wonders that his thoughts could for a moment have strayed from so lovely a being. Floating, floating to the soft strains of the heavenly music, all eyes are gazing upon her. Can it indeed be a being of earth, or is it a peri strayed from paradise? The music ceases; the flying feet are motionless; the head is drooping heavily upon Don Manuel's shoulder; she has swooned; a crowd gather around. No! the subtle poison has done its fatal work; death has claimed the glorious beauty as *his* bride. Ah! Don Manuel! too late come the frenzied kisses upon the cold lips; the passionate heart is at rest; its wild throbbing has ceased forever.

The lady Inez returned to her home ere the snows had quite melted from its hills and vales; her cold beauty is waning now, and she is still unmarried. A tale of the evil she had wrought followed her, wafted upon the southern breeze, and suitors gradually dropped off.

The fascinating Don Manuel may be occasionally

seen in the streets of P——; a grey haired man in the habit of a monk. The broken-hearted old father rests by the side of his darling child; the walls of the house of Alvarez are still standing, covered with a drapery of luxuriant vines and moss, and every night at the witching hour of twelve, so the tale runs, there glides through its deserted gardens the white-robed figure of a young and beautiful woman.

Night Thoughts.

NOT more weird are the "Poppy Visions of Cathay" than those which drive sleep from my pillow. Strange thoughts of Life and Death, of Heaven and Eternity. Of peaceful, happy nights, when "Safe our quiet Eden lay." Of moonlit, starlit, heaven-born nights, when shadow of trees fell across the dewy lawn, and blossoms exhaled their fragrance, and insects chirped softly, while within life was set to music. Soft breathings of healthful, rosy children. Quiet, tranquil slumber for the elders, with bright smiles, glad greetings, frolic and play when the sun comes creeping over the hills. Again, sick-bed watchings, hours of anxiety when the night lamp is shaded from weary eyes, and the light of a young life is burning low. A pale, pinched face on the pillow,

that a few nights since was warm and sweet in its frame of soft brown hair. Wringing of hands and hurried prayers, so fraught with agonized entreaty, it seems that Heaven and earth must move to answer.

Death-bed scenes when the life we would gladly give our own to save is gliding away from us, and we sit dumb and powerless, and then again strive frantically to ward off the Destroyer.

Nights of tearless, sleepless agony, when we sit listening to the same sounds, looking on the same scene, which only mocks us with its unchanged beauty, for we know the soft summer wind is stirring the grass over a grave where rests the form that once lay wrapt in happy dreams, in the little bed that stands vacant beside our own. Heaven is far away from us. Darkness deeper than the night is brooding over us.

Troubles thicken. Quiet heart-rest comes no more. The nights pass away with sudden wakings, and unavailing effort to drive thought away.

The clock strikes three! The darkest hour which comes before the dawn! Oh, despairing doubting soul! take courage; trust in God's providence; even now the light is faintly streaking the eastern sky, the night is passing into oblivion.

Life's Contrasts.

YESTERDAY in the whirl and bustle of the great metropolis, threading my way through its close and crowded business streets, up steep flights of stairs, into offices and sanctums wherein sat perspiring publishers, editors, designers, engravers, hot and busy, polite but hurried.

In the streets heat and noise, vile sights and sounds and odors, one does not wonder that children droop and die; that men commit murder and suicide; that women turn aside from the path of rectitude to keep soul and body together.

Great, restless, throbbing city! gladly I shake your dust from my feet and step on the cars that whirl me past river and hill, mountain and meadow, villa and farm-house, till I reach that "dearest spot on earth to me — home, sweet home."

To day in the pure free air of the country,

> "Life's burdens fall, its discords cease,
> I lapse into the glad release
> Of nature's own exceeding peace."

Driving with a party of friends to the Shakers at Niskayuna, up the long ascent with views of hills and river and city behind us, and glimpses of the blue tops

of the Catskills and Helderbergs to the south, out on the long level stretch of road, shaded by drooping elms and willows; birds singing in the branches and sunbeams shimmering through, over ferns, wild lupins, and daisies. Here hangs the dainty nest of the oriole gently swaying in the summer breeze, there scampers a light-footed squirrel almost under our horse's feet and up the nearest tree to peer out at us from the safe shelter of his leafy retreat. Now we pass through the dense shade of the fragrant pine grove and out by the lake where the pond lilies grow, and alight in the quiet, neat, orderly precincts of Shakerdom. Entering the house of worship, with its spotless walls and polished floors and benches, we are shown seats and listen to a brief discourse by one of the brethren followed by singing and the dance or promenade peculiar to the Shaker form of worship.

Earnest and devout, affecting one to tears rather than to laughter. Here are old men and women who have never known the joys, nor the sorrows, the anxieties, nor the sweet delights of family ties, whose faces show a perfect serenity and contentment. Occasionally, as the procession moves round and round, we notice a stolid faced man, one whose bodily wants are supplied which is to him the ultimate of life.

Young girls who look pure as the angels, in their white gowns and caps, join in the dance. Here comes a man in citizens dress, evidently a recent arrival,

whose face bears the traces of care, weariness and disappointment. Life to him has proved a failure, I should say, and he has come to seek rest. Here is a dear little girl, unlike the others, in blue dress and white collar, and her long fair curls have as yet been spared, she has a happy face and will grow up pure and unsullied; better, far better, in this peaceful shelter, away from the snares and temptations of the world, than in one of those wretched tenement houses in the great city where misery and vice join hands.

And now adieu dear Shaker friends, we admire, but do not envy you, for we think 'tis

"Better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved."

From Under my Awning.

WHEN the fates condemn one to spend the summer months where the "song of brooks and birds," the glory of sunrise and sunset, the "airs out-blown from ferny dells, and clover bloom, and sweet-briar smells," can be enjoyed only in retrospection, the next best thing is to shut down the gates (metaphorically speaking) of one's longings and aspirations, and if a briny drop comes filtering through occasionally, after reading a letter from mountain or sea-shore, mop

it up, give the gates another push, look out the window, and learn how much one can see in a very limited space that is interesting, amusing, and pathetic. Sit here in the rocker by the work table; don't look at the confused heap of waists minus a button, kneeless pants, and toeless stockings, they try the eyes and the patience sometimes, but it will be any thing but a happy day when the work table is in prim order and there's no more patching to be done.

Now peep through the geraniums and see what you will see. Elms waving lightly in the breeze, an empty robin's nest in one, which the sparrows have appropriated, and are re-fitting with wisps of hay, in the neatest and most approved style of nest building. Across the street a little barefoot waif with scant and torn dress, a handkerchief pinned over her yellow hair, and a wistful look sad to see in the face of a child, is sitting on the steps arranging bunches of wintergreens in a basket. A barefoot boy with a loaf of bread under his arm steals behind her and silently watches her, his fingers creep slyly through the rails, and we hope he is not going to pilfer a bunch. No, he thinks better of it, and we recall something about a good angel over one shoulder, and a bad one over the other, etc. The good one evidently gets the best of it, and he the boy, not the angel) sits down and helps her, then buys a penny bunch and marches off. A really more gen-

erous act than ours in calling her over and investing a bright five cent piece in five tiny bunches, for what boy, barefoot or well shod, would not rather invest money in candy or peanuts than in wintergreens.

"Barefoot boy with cheek of tan,
Blessings on thee little man."

Next comes a vender of soap, "three cakes for twenty-five cents or one for ten." We don't want any, but "the times are so hard and a family to support." Well, we invest twenty-five cents. Next a tramping of small feet, and a troop of youngsters coming up the street. Hurrah! it's vacation. School out at eleven and nothing but play till September; and in less time than it takes to write it the school clothes are exchanged for the play clothes, and the front steps are a rendezvous for all the boys within a dozen blocks. Those unfortunates in the vicinity who never had any children, and who have forgotten that there was ever such a period in their own lives, involuntarily wish that a hurricane might suddenly arise and blow them all in a bee line into the river, or that a tidal wave might wash up and sweep them all off in a promiscuous heap. Ah! but it's a good thing to live one's life, to let God's air and sunshine into the house, to open heart and home to the children, to give kind words to the young, the aged, the unfortunate, if we can give nothing else. Rap at the basement door, and up

comes Nora with two nice gingham aprons, so cheap, and the girl's mother sick at home. Ah, dear! do the wretched all come to our door? We take one, and sigh as we look at the collapsed condition of our portmonnaie and wonder whether we shall end our days in that large white building a little further up the hill.

Now let us go down to lunch and after "snatching a hasty morsel of refreshment," perhaps also snatching a hasty nap on the lounge while the children are in the garden playing circus, we shall feel in blither mood to sit down to our afternoon's mending and take a peep now and then from under the awning. Now begins the tide of travel to the park, young men and maidens tapping a lively tattoo on the walk with their croquet mallets, fathers and mothers trundling baby carriages, and little trots pattering along beside them. Wealth and ease leaning comfortably back in carriages, equestrians of both sexes clattering gaily along and those who earn the bread by the sweat of the brow walking a little wearily up the hill with wife and children, to listen to the concert free to rich and poor, and inhale the fresh air alike free to all. So on they go, pretty faces, homely faces, cross faces, pleasant faces (and oh! we wish some of the mother's faces might wear a sweeter expression. It's sad to see the little ones so often pulled and jerked and scolded, and the bright little faces shadowed for some merry antic

that is just as natural as the frolic of a kitten), pretty dresses gracefully looped and horrid dresses with panniers *wobbling* (shade of Webster pardon us) about in the most ridiculous manner. And now our eyes ache with looking at the tide of human faces and our ears with listening to the tramp of restless feet, we raise the awning and leave the flowers to bask in the glory of the setting sun.

An Ungallant Ghost.

The children were playing in the nursery. They had converted the lounge into an express wagon, piled it with every thing available they could lay their mischievous hands upon, harnessed two chairs together and were driving with a noise and clatter that appeared to afford them much satisfaction, and make up in a measure for the lack of speed in their somewhat stiff-legged team. Mamma had just taken the last stitch in a suit of clothes for the youngest of the boisterous trio, who had reached the mature age of five, and who had watched their progress from cutting out to the sewing on of the last button, and in a twinkling "Baby" is strutting about in all the dignity of his first pants.

A thawing, drizzly, cheerless day, the children grow

more boisterous, mamma opens her mouth and after the manner of Mr. Jellyby, closes it again without an audible sound. "Let them be happy while they may," she says, mentally, and looks out upon the dreary prospect with a sigh. The yearly coal bill has just been presented, the school bill lies in the work-table drawer, other bills will soon fall due, the children need shoes and the dozen things a family of children are always needing; furniture needs repairing, paint needs retouching, the once handsome house begins to have a shabby look that all the little arts of feminine handicraft fail to hide.

Mamma calculates her income for the hundredth time in the last twenty-four hours, and for the hundredth time says, mentally, again, "Where is the money coming from?" Spirits neither of the earth nor air vouchsafe an answer. She breathes a sort of prayer, half to the Being who shapes our destinies, and half to one who has passed to that land whence none return. The prayer is a very despairing one, with little faith that it will be answered, for a hardness, a doubt in a merciful and beneficent Providence is stealing into her heart as she thinks of friends and acquaintances treading the sheltered and sun-lit paths of life, while the storm has burst upon her with sudden and bewildering fury. It is growing dusk. "Mamma, shall I tell Katey to get tea? I'm awful hungry,"

shouts irrepressible Johnnie. Permission is given, and the good-natured maid soon shows her broad face in the door and announces, "Tay is ready, mum." The table is neatly laid, fire and lamp burn brightly, and the look of cosy comfort is in pleasant contrast with the gloom outside, and while the family are enjoying the cup that cheers, we will take a peep at their surroundings. The house is an old-time mansion, but having been thoroughly rejuvenated by its late owner, shows little trace of the lapse of years since its substantial brick walls were laid. Some trim villas and cottages have sprung up around it since horse and steam cars have brought it within easy access of the town, yet the old house, with its traditionary lore, still stands, a well-preserved and stately relic of the olden time.

Many are the weird legends that have formed the subject of a winter night's tale among the ignorant and superstitious in the neighborhood; for this house, "wherein men have lived and died," has for long years been styled "The Haunted House." One tale is of a murdered heiress, and buried gold which still awaits the fortunate finder that shall bring it to the light of day. Another is of the sudden disappearance of a young heir, whose bones are supposed to be lying without Christian burial where the sunshine and the dews of heaven never penetrate.

Its present occupants possibly have laid the ghost,

as neither "black spirits nor white, red spirits nor gray," have appeared to any member of the family. Twice have visitants of flesh and blood entered, not "at the open door," after the fashion of people of their ilk, preferring to make an entrance through the window, and taking all the accessible valuables departed as informally as they came. Twice has the heroic mistress of the mansion, at the witching hour "when grave yards yawn," firing at imaginary house-breakers, left the traces of her valor in the walls.

But we left our friends at the tea-table; afterward came the lessons and putting the children to bed, then when all was quiet, drawing her arm chair in front of the fire, the mother falls to meditating again. Katey sings while she irons in the kitchen below, the wind sighs and moans, or shrieks and whistles outside, the blinds rattle, the trees groan and bend their naked branches in the blast, the rain is beating against the windows. Hark! What sound is that? A rustling of garments beside the lonely figure in the chair causes her heart to throb with a sudden terror and her limbs seem paralyzed. Do the spirits of the dead indeed walk the earth, or does this "strange phantom come from over-thought?" A majestic form stands beside her, "Follow me," is uttered in a low but distinct tone, and pale and trembling she follows the lead of her ghostly visitor. Down the broad staircase, through the

wide, silent hall, down another flight of stairs into a corner of one of the great cellars leads the ghost and follows the trembling woman. A shovel stands near. "Dig!" is the next command; surely an ungallant ghost! but without a protest she takes the shovel and sets about her unwonted task. Little progress is made. After what seems an hour of hard labor, she pauses breathless and panting in her task; again the word "dig!" in a sepulchral whisper. With her last remnant of strength she toils on; deep and deeper grows the cavity, her arms and back are aching intolerably, she can scarce raise the shovel, but at last — a box — the lid flies off and Gold! Gold! bright, dazzling, unmistakable gold meets her bewildered gaze. Can it be, can it indeed be possible that it is all her own? She lifts her eyes to her supernatural visitor — he has vanished. Alas! the gold has vanished, too. She is sitting in her arm chair, great drops of perspiration on her brow and numb with cold, for the fire is burning low. Katey still sings and irons in the kitchen, the rain still beats against the panes, the wind still moans and rattles at the casements, and still the query remains unanswered "Where is the money coming from?"

Good-bye to the Old Year.

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: 'It might have been.'"

writes one of our noblest poets: yet another, equally sad, often spoken by the lips, oftener, perhaps, inaudible to mortal ears, down in the depths of the heart, is that little word "Good-bye." Often lightly spoken by friends who part for a day, a week, a month, perhaps a year — pleasure, business, travel, change of scene fill up the interval. Even the year so long in anticipation, glides swiftly past, and again hands are clasped in glad greeting.

Again, sad, solemn, is the "good-bye" which is said for the last time on earth, when one "weary of labor and welcoming sleep" is passing away to that land so near and yet so far. Life's work is done, and the long retrospect of years show a fair record of an honest, upright, generous, well-ordered life. Friends stand around with the solemn mien which the dignity of death inspires; grown up children shed quiet tears; there is no frantic grief for the life that goes out at three score and ten. The good-bye is said, the eyes close for the last time on earthly scenes, and a sad and mournful feeling pervades us for the loss of the good man gone

from among us. There is one less to cherish here, one more to meet us "there."

A dying mother feebly clasps her little ones for the last time to her bosom. Oh that dreadful "last time!" Who will love them, who will watch over them as she has done! Who will soothe their sorrows and rejoice in their joys? Who will make smooth and pleasant the rough path to their tender feet? Where will the little sunny heads nestle when weary and sick? Alas! the loving heart grows chill. "Good-bye — good-bye, my darlings," comes faintly from dying lips. Sobs, tears and groans fill the death chamber. No sadder good-bye is ever uttered.

A young grief-stricken wife sits by the bedside of her husband. "Ah, dearest, who will love, who will cherish you when I am gone? Who can shield you from the jostle of the rude world so well as I? If I could but live for your sake!" The words are scarcely spoken ere the death angel stands between them. Good-bye, good-bye; I shall await you there." One is wafted across the shining river, the other turns wearily to take up life's burdens.

Good-bye to hope, when every vessel that we have launched upon the sunlit waves is cast up a dismantled wreck upon a barren rock-bound coast.

Good-bye to youth, which passes as quickly as a bright, rose-scented morning in June.

Good-bye to love, to the fickle hearts we have enshrined within our own; clung to despairingly; tried to believe in till doubt gives place to certainty. Then comes the unspoken "good-bye," and henceforth this world is "but a poor half world that swings uneasy on its axis, and makes us dizzy with the clatter of its wreck."

There's been many a sad good-bye in the twelve months that are past, yet let us bury our perished hopes and joys and loves out of sight in the grave of the dead year, and go forth to meet the new year that is dawning, sadder, yet wiser, remembering that the baptism of sorrow purifies and strengthens the soul.

Good-bye, Old Year! Past is your springtime, with budding trees, springing grasses, sunshine and showers; past your summer days with their fervid heat, their blossoms, and their splendor of gold and purple; past your autumn with its garnered grains, its gathered fruits, its faded grass and fallen leaves. And now, with the first keen breath of the Frost Spirit on your brow, you are passing away.

Good-bye, Old Year.

Rich gift of God! A year of time!
What pomp of rise and shut of day,
What hues wherewith our northern clime
Makes autumn's dropping woodlands gay,
What airs outblown from feray dells,
And clover bloom and sweet-brier smells,
What songs of brooks and birds, what fruits and flowers,
Green woods and moonlit snows have in its round been ours!

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